

Opposition picks Ping as 2004 standard-bearer

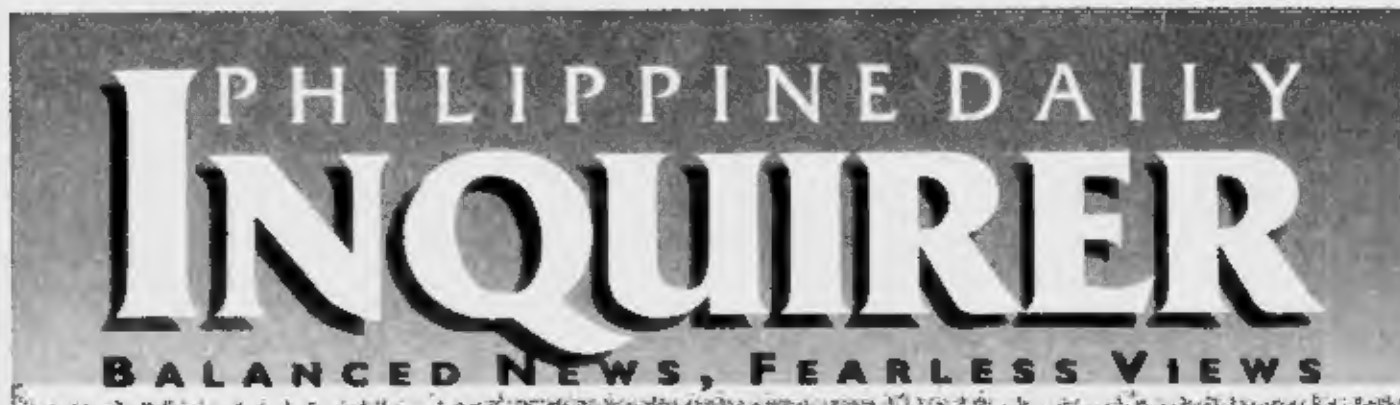
Story below, Col. 1

2 broadcasters ambushed: 1 dies, the other survives

By Joyce Mejillano,
Gil Francis Arevalo
and Dennis Jay C. Santos

TWO broadcasters—one a suspected supporter of communist guerrillas and another an anti-communist commentator—were ambushed separately in Albay and Davao City, with the latter surviving.

2 BROADCASTERS/A21



Uh-oh, look what John O's son is up to

By Kathy I. Navarro
and Nestor Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—This province's vice governor prefers to make his point with his fists. Vice Gov. John Gregory Osmeña, a scion of Cebu's most powerful political family, figured in a fist fight twice in one

UH-OH/A4

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph

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★★★

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SPECIAL ASEAN LEADERS' MEETING ON SARS

Vithes Samosorn, Bangkok, Thailand

29 April 2003



CRISIS meeting of the leaders of the 10 Asean nations plus China in Bangkok hopes to convince a spooked world that sufficient measures are in place to contain the spread of SARS which has cost drastic declines in the region's economy. The Asean summit agrees on 18 measures to combat SARS, including an information network and the setting up of an emergency fund.

AFP

Village bans SARS suspect

*Tale of two women:
One jeered; the other
cheered as she is
discharged from
hospital in Tacloban*

By Ryan D. Rosaura, PDI Mindanao Bureau
and Armand N. Nocum, in Manila

OZAMIZ CITY—A woman suspected of being afflicted with the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has been expelled by residents of Barangay Tinago.

The woman, a native of Oroquieta City, arrived in Tinago from Manila at about noon on Saturday. She had a cold and was complaining of dizziness.

She took the same passenger liner that ferried the domestic helper from Tumbulig town who was widely suspected of having SARS.

What alerted the residents was the mask that the woman was wearing. Their fears rose after

hearing her say that her deck was near that of the Tumbulig woman.

The residents went to Beth Paulino, president of Purok Riverside, and demanded that she tell the woman's brother to remove her from the community.

"She just wanted to rest in her brother's house because she was dizzy from the trip," Paulino said later.

VILLAGE/A18

Roxas admits N95 masks out of stock

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

IF 3M decides to remove the supply allocation to the Philippines, expect the acute shortage in N95-type mask, the basic gear against the spread of SARS, to worsen.

This was revealed by Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II who admitted that the N95-type masks were out of stock and that orders have been filled up to next month.

Roxas said that 3M, which had earmarked 5 percent of its output of N95 masks to the Philippines, was planning to divert the supply to countries hardest hit by SARS.

3M produces the N95 masks out of its factory in the United States. This type mask has been certified by the World Health Organization as the minimum standard required for health-care workers exposed to SARS. The N95 model has the least tolerance for oily environment; No. 95 signifies its filter efficiency. Thus, the N95 model is able to filter 95 percent of all particles 0.3 micron

ROXAS/A18



JUST like any traveler, President Macapagal's temperature is taken before boarding a Lear jet for Bangkok. No one was allowed to kiss her goodbye. She also carried an anti-killer pneumonia kit.

Asean plus China agree on SARS battle plan

By Alcuin Papa

BANGKOK (via PLDT)—Philippine President Macapagal-Arroyo and other Southeast Asian leaders yesterday held crisis talks with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and agreed to set up a regional information network to combat Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), Asia's worst crisis since the financial meltdown of 1997-1998.

China has been criticized for not revealing the true extent of the disease for months after it first appeared there last November and then was spread internationally by air travelers via Hong Kong.

In an unprecedented move, the Chinese premier came to Bangkok to brief Asean leaders about Beijing's efforts to combat the disease, which has killed 148 in China.

Also with the official Chinese delegation was Tung Chee-hwa

ASEAN/A21

By Joey A. Gabieta
PDI Visayas Bureau

TACLOBAN CITY—She waved, and the people applauded. What a difference a clean bill of health makes.

JP, the overseas worker from Hong Kong who was misdiagnosed as the country's fourth SARS patient, emerged from her hospital isolation room yesterday afternoon, to a decidedly more friendly world.

JP was accompanied by her husband and a younger sister when she left the Eastern Visayas

Regional Medical Center (EVRMC), where she had been confined for the past five days.

She came out from her room at around 3:10 p.m. and immediately boarded a hospital ambulance that was to bring her home to Barangay Maybucog in Maydonlong, Eastern Samar, some 224 km from this city.

When she came out, kibitzers that included patients, medical staff, office personnel, drivers and ordinary onlookers cheered her on.

"I am happy that this is over

TALK/A18

Now that we've acknowledged the truth . . .

By Sen. Juan M. Flavio, MD

Editors' Note: The author, chair of the Senate Committee on Health and a former health secretary, argues for mandatory pre-departure and arrival quarantines for overseas workers, to protect what he called the country's competitive edge: the overseas workers.

FINALLY we are all in agreement. We have SARS.

In a sense I am relieved. Now that we have acknowledged the truth, we can frame both the truth and proposed actions beyond the current context of a disease outbreak. If we limit our reading of the problem to this level, we run the risk of doing more damage than good.

The truth is:

We must stress what we know. First, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome affects all nations. It affects the way nations and economies interact with each other now and in the future.

This was my problem with all the debate over whether or not

SARS was officially here. The notion of a "SARS-free" country based on the convoluted definition of the "absence of local transmission," was a bubble waiting to burst. In a globalized world where people, ideas, products and services cross borders at an unprecedented rate, the concept of a country that could be geo-

NOW/A18

'United opposition' picks Lacson for 2004



THE FACE of the opposition is Sen. Panfilo Lacson whom party leaders endorse on Tuesday for the presidential election next year. From left, Reps. Carlos Padilla and Butz Aquino, Juan Ponce Enrile, JV Ejercito

By Juliet Labog-Javellana
and Christine O. Avendaño

FOR now, Sen. Panfilo Lacson is the "face of the united opposition" for next year's presidential election.

At the launching of the "united opposition" yesterday, leaders of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP) and of ousted President Joseph Estrada's Partido ng Masang Pilipino (PMP) endorsed Lacson as their presidential candidate.

Conspicuously absent was Sen. Edgardo Angara, LDP president, who reportedly has declared his support for businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco as the opposition's standard-bearer.

About 200 politicians and supporters gathered at Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, for the launching, which was held reportedly after a feng shui expert had said that any day between April 26 and 29 would be "auspicious" for Lacson.

The delegates recited a "pledge of unity" which asked Lacson to "lead us until victory is achieved."

But ex-Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, lead convenor of the "united opposition," said that others aspiring to be the opposition candidate were still welcome to

UNITED/A6



When laundering money is good

By Norman Bordadora
and Armand N. Nocum

IT'S literally dirty money.

Dr. Michael Angelo Medina, coordinating physician of the health organization SOS International, is not ruling out the possibility that a person can get SARS from money bills and coins.

WHEN/A18

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will have partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LAYESA, PDI RESEARCH/04/30/03

Second FRONT PAGE

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Peace talks not fast enough—KL

By Norman Bordadora

MALAYSIA yesterday said talks between the Philippine government and Muslim rebels were not moving fast enough because of the continued violence in Mindanao.

As mediator in the government's peace negotiations with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, Malaysia called on the secessionist group to stop performing acts that showed "terrorist tendencies."

Mohamad Najib Tun Abdul Razak, Malaysian defense minister, urged the rebels to "work within the constitutional framework" of the Philippines.

In his keynote speech before the National Conference on Regional Security, Najib said

Malaysia, a mostly Muslim state, did not support or condone Islamic secessionists seeking change through "extreme" behavior outside the political arena. "We respect the territorial integrity of the Philippines," Najib said.

The conference, held in Makati City and attended by about 100 defense officials, academics and diplomats, was organized by the Center for Strategic Studies of the Office of the Presidential Adviser for Special Concerns.

ing to violence is equally condemned by true believers," Najib said. "Islam is a religion of peace," Najib said.

"If indeed it claims to represent Muslims," the Malaysian official stressed, "the Moro movement must combat radicalism and militant elements within its organization."

The call for jihad, or Muslim holy war, had long been abused by extremists to instill fear and create terror, Najib said. He urged "all sides" to see the big picture, rather than dwelling on "parochial issues and interests."

He cited the Abu Sayyaf kidnap gang as an example. "This group is using Islam to confuse people," he said.

As for other Muslim rebels, Najib said: "(They) must concentrate on bringing greater development to the community instead of merely aiming to

seize power. Let us call for a jihad against poverty, against ignorance, against underdevelopment and against prejudice."

Talks to resume

Malaysia has hosted previous talks between government negotiators and the MILF that have led to a shaky truce and other accords. But fighting has recently flared up anew, and the government has accused the rebels of planting bombs in an airport and a bustling wharf in the past two months.

At least 38 people were killed and 150 others were injured in the attacks, for which several MILF leaders and members are now facing murder charges.

An exploratory meeting in Kuala Lumpur last month failed to put an end to the fighting, raising the specter of another impasse.

The MILF, the largest Muslim guerrilla group in the Philippines with about 12,000 fighters, insisted that troops pull out of its overrun base and that the charges against its members be dropped.

On the slightly brighter side, both camps have now agreed to resume formal peace negotiations suspended two years

ago. More exploratory talks are set in the Malaysian capital in the next few days.

While conceding that some headway had been made, Najib foretold more "temporary setbacks along the road."

True enough, the military reported yesterday that five Muslim rebels and one soldier had been killed in an hour-long gun battle after an army convoy was ambushed outside Datu Odin Sinsuat town in Maguindanao province.

Najib called on the opposing sides to establish "confidence-building measures" that could go beyond peace accords. "If both are committed," he said, "I am optimistic peace can be achieved."

He said he discussed measures to move the process forward with President Macapagal Arroyo on Monday, but refused to elaborate. However, in his speech yesterday, he pointed to poverty alleviation and development as the only ways to deprive insurgency of its "allure."

Meanwhile, Defense Secretary Angelo Reyes said he saw no contradiction in talking peace while fighting. "We continue to enforce the law," he said, "but we keep the window open." With reports from AFP, AP and Reuters

Gloria still won't dance the Cha-cha

By D. Pazzibugan J. Labog-Javelana and C. Avendaño

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo is still not dancing the Charter change tune of Speaker Jose de Venecia even as the Speaker yesterday claimed that "more and more senators" were supporting constitutional amendments by way of a constituent assembly.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the President simply believes that amending the Constitution should not be a priority at this time when "there are other concerns that have to be addressed... other priorities that should be given attention."

Senate

Bunye said the President was counting on the Senate to stop De Venecia's "Cha-cha express."

"We know it takes two to make this happen... If the Senate will not approve of the manner in which (the Constitution) is being proposed to be amended, we don't see much progress along this line," Bunye said.

De Venecia, who

claimed earlier that the Charter could be amended by November to change the system of government from a presidential to a parliamentary system, said the two chambers were closer to agreeing to convene a constituent assembly after he met with senators yesterday.

Magic number

"The magic number is about to be reached," said De Venecia even if only four senators—Edgardo Angara, Aquilino Pimentel Jr., Vicente Sotto III and Robert Barbers—showed up for the luncheon meeting at the Mandarin hotel in Makati.

"We agreed that we are moving towards developing a consensus for a constituent assembly but our most important agreement is that there will definitely be elections in 2004 and there will be no extension of the terms (of the incumbent officials)," De Venecia said after the meeting.

He said the senators agreed that it was time to shift to a parliamentary and federal form of government with a unicameral legislature.

Most senators reportedly disagree with De Venecia's preferred mode of amending the Charter through a constituent assembly.

But a House official has claimed that 10 senators were already in favor of a constituent assembly, two votes short of the number needed to approve a resolution filed by Angara and Barbers.

House

The House earlier approved the resolution proposing that the Congress constitute itself into a constituent assembly.

Angara said after yesterday's meeting that no agreement was concluded on the mode of effecting the amendments.

Angara, who chairs the Senate committee on constitutional amendments, said the 14-member committee was divided on whether to go for a constituent assembly or a constitutional convention.

"Half-half, it could either go for Con-con or Con-ass," he said in a phone interview.

But Senate President Franklin Drilon noted that "if there is no majority (in the committee), there is no committee report."

He said that as far as he was concerned, he was not changing his position favoring a constitutional convention.

Drilon is one of 14 senators who signed a resolution calling for a constitutional convention to amend the Constitution. That resolution still stands, he said.



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\$30-M package in the bag for GMA's US visit

By Norman Bordadora

WHEN she comes home after her top-level tete-a-tete with United States President George W. Bush, among the goodies in President Macapagal-Arroyo's bag will be the Philippines' \$30 million share in the US foreign military finance (FMF).

This is a "done deal," according to Ambassador to Washington Albert del Rosario.

Ms. Macapagal's state visit to the United States will push through this month, although it will be shorter than originally planned.

Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye yesterday confirmed that the visit, first scheduled April 1-5, had been reset to May 19-21. The President called off the trip as early as March 13 due to the impending United States attack on Iraq.

Bunye was asked over Radyo ng Bayan yesterday to confirm a White House statement confirming the new schedule. He said the dates had been jointly agreed upon.

In an interview at the Inquirer offices, Del Rosario explained that the FMF share, intended for the country's counterterrorism campaign, was part of the supplemental budget for the US war on Iraq. He said it would soon be released to the Armed Forces, on top of a \$30 million grant under the US economic support fund (ESF).

Del Rosario said both \$30-million packages were the results of the Philippines' moral and political support to the US-led coalition against Iraq.

Bunye did not say why the state visit had been cut to just three days, but he noted that Ms. Macapagal was one of the "very few" world leaders invited to Washington this year. With Dona Passibugan

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Be ready to die in Iraq, RP cops told

By C. Esguerra

BE READY to die.

The Filipino humanitarian and peace-keeping contingent to Iraq should not only settle for a measly salary but also brace for the possibility of death, said Lt. Gen. Rodolfo Garcia, Armed Forces vice chief of staff.

Garcia warned that injury or death was an "accepted risk" for the mission when he was placed on the hot seat in yesterday's Bulung Pulungan forum at the Westin Philippine Plaza in Pasay.

But he failed to note that the team would include doctors and nurses who would tend to war victims.

Asked if the government could collect for damages from the US-led coalition should there be casualties, the official replied: "Soldiers go to conflict... like people in Mindanao are dying for honor and they would in Iraq."

"We don't want casualties... (But) we accept that there'll be casualties. That is a fact," he added.

The Macapagal administration is set to send a 500-man mission to Iraq next month. The AFP had earlier bared that each of the troops stands to get a paltry daily salary of \$3.50 (or roughly P192).

Garcia could not give any assurance that anybody could be held liable in case a member of the mission gets hurt or killed. He also could not tell if the US or Britain would pay for damages.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, he said, is currently negotiating a Status of Forces Agreement with Qatar and Kuwait. The agreement would cover the conduct of Filipino troops in these countries when they stay there on their way to Iraq, he added.

But once the team holds actual peace-keeping and humanitarian mission in war-torn Iraq, the AFP official could not say if there would be any similar agreement or policy that could cover its conduct there.

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I didn't ask for the job, says new DPWH boss

By Blanche S. Rivera

STUNG by criticisms, newly appointed Public Works Secretary Florante Soriqez said yesterday that he was willing to give up his post if the President finds a replacement for him.

Soriqez said he had not lobbied for the leadership of the Department of Public Works and Highways but merely "accepted what was offered" when he was called to Malacañang on Friday.

"I would gladly relinquish (my post) if the

President finds someone else to take over the department in the next few months," Soriqez said in an interview yesterday, a day after he was sworn into office.

Soriqez said that he was "surprised" by the opposition from congressmen who were not even knowledgeable of the controversial Megadike project.

"The congressmen from Central Luzon are not complaining. They have nothing against me. How come these congressmen from Visayas and Mindanao are the ones who want me out?" he said.

There are two pending legal proceedings involving Soriqez, one pending in the Supreme Court and another in the Office of the Ombudsman concerning the multibillion-peso Megadike project.

Soriqez said that he did not expect to be appointed because the top DPWH post was first offered to former Undersecretary Ted Encarnacion, and later to Undersecretary Manuel Bonoan, the most senior career official.

Soriqez said that he did not intend to

stay long at his new post and that he would slide back to being Undersecretary for Operations if and when the President finds a permanent secretary or in 2004 when the President's term expires.

He, however, expressed confidence that he had enough expertise to handle the DPWH despite his lack of preparation for the top post.

Soriqez, 60, has served the department for 41 years, starting as a laborer for the construction of the Manila International Airport driveway and later holding district posts when he became an engineer.

He was appointed DPWH assistant secretary in 2001 and Undersecretary in January this year.

Soriqez said that he wanted to fast-track ongoing projects nationwide. He has already ordered an inventory of projects to see if they were moving according to schedule.

He also said that he would continue the policies of outgoing Public Works Secretary and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chair Bayani Fernando on the nationwide clearing of sidewalks and proper engineering to eliminate opportunities for corruption.



PEREZ

Perez may yet be back

By Dona Pazzibugan

AFTER initially denying it, presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye hinted yesterday that ex-justice Secretary Hernando Perez may yet be re-appointed to the Cabinet.

In his regular news briefing, Bunye denied rumors that Perez would replace Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza.

"I don't think so, because Secretary Mendoza is not moving from his position," Bunye insisted.

But when asked if Perez is returning to the Cabinet in any capacity, Bunye was less categorical.

"Ah we, we don't know," he said after a moment's pause.

"As far as the present Cabinet members are concerned, there's every indication that they're staying put in their respective places," he added.

The other day Bunye played down rumors that a Cabinet reshuffle is in the works.

Talks have it that Perez would replace Mendoza, who in turn would replace Interior Secretary Joey Lina.

Lina, according to the rumors, will take over as public works secretary following Bayani Fernando's resignation.

Fernando gave up the DPWH portfolio in favor of his post as Metro Manila Development Authority chair.

Public officials are banned from holding dual positions.

Bunye said the President himself has denied that Lina, Mendoza or any other Cabinet official would be sacked.

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May 1 'rabble-rousers' warned

By Carlito Pablo and Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

MALACANANG yesterday warned what it called "rabble-rousers" against attempting to create mayhem on Thursday, Labor Day, which also marks the second anniversary of the bloody May 1, 2001 uprising of supporters of jailed ex-President Joseph Estrada.

"Our authorities are there and we are prepared for those who will make trouble on Labor Day," Presidential Spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said in a dzRB radio interview.

Police commands in six regions outside Metro Manila have been ordered to augment the troops of the Super Task Force Kapayapaan, the police body formed to handle the rallies in the capital on May 1.

The contingency plan, which will involve the police commands of Central Luzon, Southern Tagalog, Ilocos, Cordillera, Cagayan and Bicol regions, was contained in Letter of Instruction No. 17 issued by Philippine National Police chief Hermogenes Ebdane Jr.

According to the LOI, this kind of deployment was expected when the "peace and order situation worsens as mass actions escalate to a level of uncontrollable magnitude."

While the order planned for a worst-case scenario, Ebdane said participants in the Labor Day rallies on Thursday were "not on the scale" of the May 1, 2001 violent protests in which pro-Estrada supporters tried to storm Malacañang.

"Perhaps, it's not even one-tenth (of the protesters who joined the May 1 siege)," Ebdane said. "The people have learned their lesson. Most of them do not want to participate anymore."

The National Capital Region Police Office yesterday placed its members on heightened alert and has started deploying some in critical areas in Metro Manila in preparation for tomorrow's rallies.

Chief Supt. Enrique Galang, acting director for operations, said members of the civil disturbance management (CDM) unit have been instructed to watch out for saboteurs during the rallies who might carry out "terrorist and atrocious acts."

He said police officials would be conferring

with militant leaders to "reach a common understanding in ensuring a peaceful, orderly and safe Labor Day."

Bunye appealed to those planning demonstrations on May 1 to let the government use the day to pay tribute to the "great Filipino worker."

"The idea really is to honor the true and genuine laborer," Bunye said as he noted that some parties were intending to use the rallies to "push the political agenda of certain people."

In another interview over dzRH radio, Bunye trashed former senator Juan Ponce Enrile who claimed that the government had allegedly hatched a plot to cause turmoil on Thursday and pin the blame on the opposition.

"Look who's talking," said Bunye, recalling that Enrile faked his own ambush in 1972 as part of the plan of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos to impose martial law.

"We believe that people don't have short memories. We know that he (Enrile) himself spread the canard of false ambushes and he's really adept at such practices," Bunye said.

With a report from TJ Burgonio

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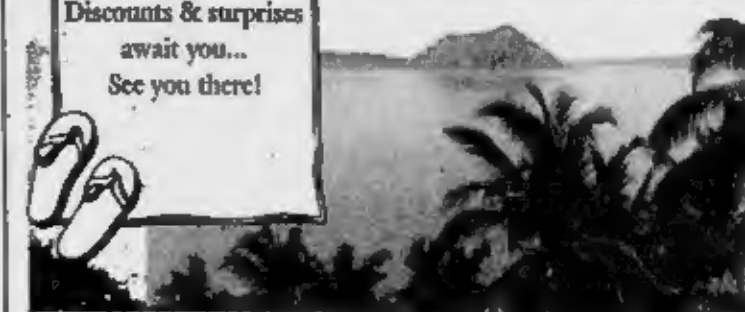
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No wage hike for Labor Day

AS he has come to expect in recent years, the Filipino worker will not be seeing—or even asking for—a wage increase on Labor Day.

The government is instead laying out free concerns and free train rides for workers and their families.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri said the business environment at present makes it difficult to ask for higher wages, given the low demand and the already high wages of Filipino workers in comparison with those of laborers from other countries in the region.

A statement from the labor department last Monday all but confirmed that there would be no announcement of a mandated wage increase order on Thursday.

Labor Undersecretary Josephus Jimenez also said the department has not received any petition for a wage hike.

"I think labor has realized that it is hard to search for higher wages at this time because there will always be someone out there, say in India or Vietnam, who are willing to do the same work for less pay," Neri said in an interview.

Rank No. 2

Neri cited a 2002 survey released recently by the Swiss-based Institute for Management Development which showed that Philippine labor ranked No. 2 in terms of labor costs in manufacturing among 48 other developing countries.

In terms of compensation levels, which include wages and supplementary benefits, Philippine labor also ranked high at No. 8, said Neri, the director general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

He said that although the country ranked No. 1 in terms of the availability of skilled labor here, thus making the grant of higher wages reasonable, increasing these wages further may not be called for.

"The rate of inflation is already very low anyway, so I guess there will be less pressure for a wage increase," said Neri.

In March, the rate of inflation slowed to 2.9 percent, compared to 3.1 percent in February and 3.6 percent for the same period last year, mainly because of lower increases in the prices of major food products.

Instead of agitating for a wage increase, Neri said workers should upgrade their labor skills and productivity to earn higher incomes.

"The better mind-set would be to think of increasing value creation and production because a mere increase in wages without a corresponding increase in value would be unsustainable and might force factories to close down," he said. Michelle V. Remo

'Bokya' for Obet

MAJOR agrarian reform groups yesterday gave Agrarian Reform Secretary Roberto "Obet" Pagdanganan a grade of flat zero or "bokya" on the marking of his 100th

day in office, citing his alleged failure to deliver on the promises he made more than three months ago.

The groups led by the Task Force Mapalad (TFM) and the Philippine Peasant Institute (PPI) described Pagdanganan as "a secretary who eats up his time studying issues thereby ending up having not done anything."

Jose Rodito Angeles, TFM spokesperson, said Pagdanganan spends more time shaking people's hands and kissing babies. Pagdanganan, a former Bulacan governor, is said to be running for senator despite two unsuccessful bids.

Some 150 farmers, farm workers and advocates yesterday pitched in front of the Department of Agrarian Reform hundreds of eggs with words "Obet's 100 days: Bokya as CARP" to symbolize what they alleged as Pagdanganan's dismal performance in office.

The protesters belonged to the TFM, PPI, Kaisahan, Caret, Pambansang Kilusan ng mga Samahan sa Kanayunan (PKSK), People's Campaign for Agrarian Reform Network (AR Now!), Asidharra, Pakisama, Pildharra, COIR, Samahang 53-Ektarya sa Macabud and ICSI.

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'United opposition' picks Lacson for 2004

From page A1

context the final nomination. Lacson, who voted to provide "tough, no-nonsense leadership" if elected President, said the final choice would be a collective decision of the opposition.

He earlier said he was not worried that the Supreme Court's ruling on April 1 ordering the reopening of the Kuratong Baleleng multiple-murder case against him would affect his plan to run for president.

Violation of Election Code?

Angara said members of opposition groups "appear" to have violated the Election Code when they endorsed Lacson as their standard bearer.

"They have to be careful not to violate the Election Code," Angara said.

The Election Code prohibits the endorsement of a candidate before November, or six months before the elections.

He said the proclamation was attended mostly by members of the PMP and by a "sprinkling" of LDP members. "It's not LDP-sponsored," he said.

He said that the LDP was in the process of choosing its presidential candidate and that any decision made by its executive council would have to prevail.

While LDP has yet to choose its candidate, the number of party members supporting Lacson is growing bigger, according to House Minority Leader Carlos Padilla.

Estrada is still hoping that his friend, actor Fernando Poe Jr. will run for President. But his party PMP was represented in

the launching by its president, ex-agrarian reform secretary Horacio "Boy" Morales; secretary general Lito Banayo; Estrada's son San Juan Mayor Joseph Victor Ejercito; and a number of congressmen.

Among those who delivered speeches were JV Ejercito, Padilla, Deputy Minority Leader Rolex Suplico, Makati Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino (LDP secretary general), Maguindanao Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, Cavite Representatives Gilbert Remulla and Plaridel Abaya, Laguna Gov. Ningning Lazaro, Cavite Gov. Ireneo Maliksi, Rona Ganson, retired Justice Santiago Kapunan, Eva Estrada-Kalaw, Salvador Garbano of the Justice Economy Environment Peace (JEEP), Risha Molato of the Youth for

Progressive Leadership and former Presidential Adviser Jambay Madrigal.

Pledge of unity

Also in attendance were San Juan Rep. Ronaldo Zamora, Palawan Rep. Abraham Mitra and ex-Sen. Francisco "Kit" Tatad, who wrote the "pledge of unity."

A host of local politicians, sectoral leaders and supporters filled the hall while a small group rallied outside to cheer Lacson. (See related story on page 23)

He said Filipinos were "bereft of hope" amid the massive unemployment, widespread criminality and failure of governance.

"When I am asked what is wrong in our country, I answer with full conviction: governance is what is wrong in our country," he said.

"We must demonstrate political

will through a presidency without politics and a leadership without fear, without compromise. We in the opposition, duly united, will provide that kind of tough, no-nonsense leadership," he said to the cheers of his supporters.

Enrile said there was a need to gather the "amorphous opposition" under one umbrella to avoid the humiliating defeat in 1992 when Fidel Ramos won the presidency.

He noted that the opposition still had no face because its leader, Estrada, was in jail. "For this reason we have decided to meet this morning to present the (tentative) face of the united opposition," he said.

December convention

After the launching, Banayo said the final opposition standard

bearer would be chosen during a convention 45 days before the start of the campaign period, or sometime in December.

Zamora said Lacson would definitely be it for the opposition. "Danding (Cojuangco) is running under the administration banner, if he runs. (As for FPJ), how long have we been waiting for him to say he will run?" the congressman said.

The LDP and PMP, as well as the KBL and other parties like Cavite's Magdalo have not officially endorsed Lacson but their leaders came yesterday to support him, according to Morales.

Asked why it was launched this early, Morales said: "Because people have been asking if Ping is serious (in running) and if the opposition will support him. The answer to both is yes."



When the Going Gets Rough, Only the Tough Keep Cooling



ELIGIBLE bachelor, John Gregory Osmeña, cuts a dashing figure whether in Cebu's nightlife or on the beach in Boracay.

Uh-oh, look . . .

From page A1

week, according to a police report and several eyewitness accounts.

On Friday, at the Ayala Entertainment Center, the vice governor got fuming mad and hit a man several times. The man's mistake: He said the vice governor, the son of Sen. John Henry Osmeña, was gay.

Seven days before that, on Black Saturday, the young Osmeña, who is in his early 30s and considered one of Cebu's most eligible bachelors, found himself involved in another fist fight, this time on Boracay Island. The cause: "jealousy over a lady."

On Friday, a man approached the young Osmeña inside the Erik Sports Bar and said: "They said you're gay." Osmeña immediately stood up and punched the man, identified as Jong King, several times. They were pacified by their respective friends, witnesses said.

The Cebu City police had no record of the fight. The vice governor also refused to comment on the incident. But he went on the record about the fight in Boracay.

The Black Saturday incident, which was recorded in a blotter in the Malay police station, said the fist fight was between Osmeña's group and the group of a certain Andrew Lopez, reportedly the son of former Iloilo Congressman Albertito Lopez.

The two groups exchanged punches at the Cocomangas Bar, a popular hangout near Boat Station 2 in Barangay Balabag, according to reports of the Boracay Special Police Unit (BSPU).

Citing blotter reports, PO1 Fe Rebanio of the BSPU said the brawl happened inside the bar at around 3:30 a.m. of April 19.

He said members of both groups exchanged punches, but said the report did not indicate who started the fight or how it started, except to say that it was triggered by "jealousy over a lady." The report did not identify the woman or say whether she was part of any of the groups.

There were no reported injuries or damages to property. The two groups also did not file any complaint after they settled their differences "amicably" in the presence of the police.

"They shook hands," said Rebanio, quoting the police report.

Osmeña admitted he was with a group involved in the fight, but denied he had taken part in it.

"I don't know how my name came out, I was not particularly involved in that fight; it was my friend. I was with a group of friends and when we heard there was a fight, we went there to see," Osmeña said.

He said that Lopez almost hit him in the eye when the latter tried to kick his friend.

"I've no idea what caused the fight. I don't even know the guy's name (referring to Lopez). His foot was right in the corner of my eye so I parried it," he added.

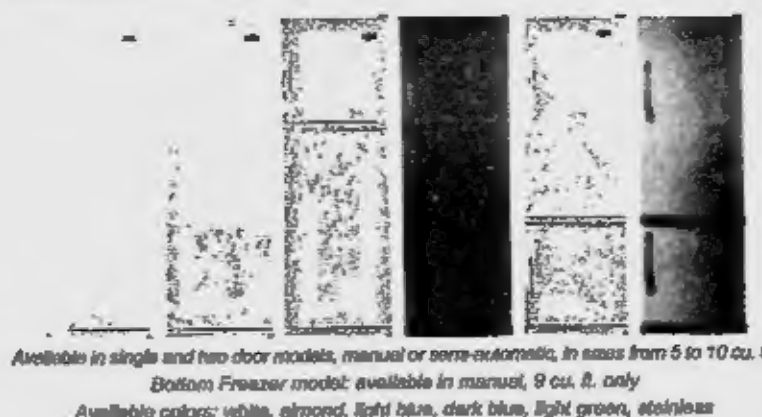
The incident was reported to the police five minutes after the fight started by someone on the staff of Cocomangas.

Osmeña said the groups later patched things up, and added he even shook hands with Lopez.



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Blunders by 3 presidents blamed for power mess

COSTLY blunders committed by three presidents have made a huge mess in the power industry and has resulted in the unabated skyrocketing of the cost of electricity.

And the latest monumental mistake is a \$500-million foreign loan to pay for President Macapagal-Arroyo's decision to reduce purchase power adjustment (PPA) charges which had driven the National Power Corp. deeper into bankruptcy.

This was the gist of a speech delivered by former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile before the Federation of Philippine Industries (FPI) as he urged the country's business and industrial sector to unite with consumers in seeking immediate reforms in the power industry.

In reaction to the speech, the federation urged the government to amend the controversial Electric Power Industry Reform Act (Epira) because it allegedly contained provisions that make it difficult for domestic businesses to be competitive.

FPI chair Meneleo Carlos Jr., speaking at the "Forum on Power" at Club Filipino, said one reason domestic businesses were becoming uncompetitive was the high cost of electricity in the country.

FPI president Jesus Arranza said some of the provisions of the Epira allowed for the regime of expensive electric power.

Review Epira

The FPI, which groups various industry associations, called for a review of the Epira's provisions pertaining to the contracts with independent power producers (IPP) of the state-owned National Power Corp. and the Manila Electric Company distribution utility.

Arranza said the government should do something about eliminating the provision that allows IPPs to charge to end-users the cost of electricity consumed, adding that this provision was causing suffering to the consuming public.

Arranza also cited a provision in the Epira which removed the cap on the return on investment that IPPs are allowed, and proposed that the cap should be restored.

"If I were Meralco and I have my own IPP, I can easily bloat my income and still make it appear as if Meralco was just breaking even because the IPPs are now exempt from having a cap on their return on investment. Then Meralco will still pass on the cost to the end-user," he said.

The FPI criticized the Lopez Group-owned Meralco for reducing the amount of electricity it purchased from Napocor to benefit the IPPs co-owned by the Lopezes.

It questioned why Meralco was buying electricity from the IPPs that charge P4.50 to P5.50 per kilowatt hour, and not from Napocor whose power is priced at P3.50 per kWh.

Among the Lopez-owned IPPs are First Gas Power Corp., Duracom and Quezon Power.

"The Epira should be reviewed to disallow cross-ownership. Those who own electricity generation companies should not be allowed to own electricity distribution companies because it results in higher electricity rates," said Arranza.

Napocor senior vice president Roland Quilala, who was at the forum, said the energy department was conducting negotiations with the IPPs on to how to reduce purchased power adjustment costs.

Publicity stunt

Enrile, an advocate for consumer protection against abuses in the electric power industry, said President Macapagal's lowering of the PPA was meant to salvage a boast she made in pushing for the passage by Congress of the Epira Law that electricity rates would immediately go down by 30 centavos per kWh.

It turned out to be a very expensive publicity stunt that backfired as electric bills of consumers skyrocketed to the public's dismay and shock, Enrile said.

Enrile traced the history of the country's worsening power crisis, starting from the decision of then President Corazon Aquino to abolish the Department of Energy, to return the Meralco to the Lopez family, and to scrap the expensive Bataan nuclear power plant, a \$2 billion mistake for which the people are still paying to this day.

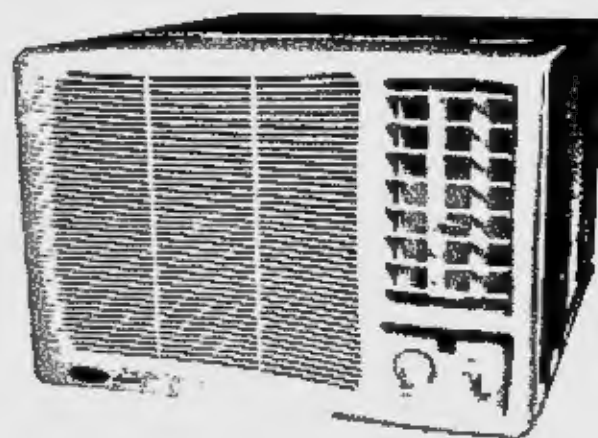
When Fidel Ramos became president, he used his emergency powers to enter into onerous contracts with independent power producers, resulting in an oversupply of power, Enrile said. As a result Napocor had to pay for the excess power it did not need or use.

Then, Enrile said, came Ms Macapagal, whose Epira raised the cost of power even more, instead of bringing it down. The former senator said he warned the President against signing Epira into a law but that he never had "the courtesy of any reply." Michelle V. Remo

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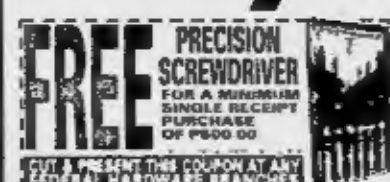


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SARS-free?

AFTER WEEKS of unrelieved gloom over what looked like a swift, irreversible slide toward a global SARS pandemic, there is good news finally. On Monday, the World Health Organization announced that the worst may be over in Vietnam, Singapore, Hong Kong and Canada. "It appears from reports that the epidemic has peaked in those countries," said WHO chief for communicable diseases David Heyman who noted that fewer cases were being reported in those places. Vietnam was cited by the WHO for showing to the world that "there is hope SARS can be contained." There had been five deaths from SARS in that country, but no new cases have been reported since April 8.

Similarly bright news have also come up on the home front. Yesterday, the overseas worker from Eastern Samar who was thought to have contracted the disease in Hong Kong was sent home after she showed no signs of fever and health authorities determined that she never had SARS in the first place. Regional officials, who had come under fire from Leyte officials and residents for bringing "JP" to the government-run East Visayas Regional Medical Center in Tacloban City, happily declared the region to be "SARS-free."

Apparently also SARS-free now is Barangay Vacante in Alcala, Pangasinan, where the two fatalities from the dread disease came from. Health authorities had ordered the village placed under quarantine for two weeks following the death on April 14 of Adela Catalan, a nursing aide in Toronto, the epicenter of the SARS outbreak in Canada. Also succumbing to SARS eight days later was her cancer-stricken father. The quarantine was lifted Sunday, although 26 people will remain in isolation for a few more days. Happily no one in the village came down with fever or any other symptoms associated with SARS. And neither did some 700 or 800 people with whom Catalan came in contact with as she traveled to many places and attended social functions during her short-lived homecoming.

There have been, of course, several suspected cases of SARS recently, including a South Korean girl who was found to have high fever upon her arrival in Manila Monday. But with no new cases being confirmed by health authorities, the country can now be said to be SARS-free—for the time being at least.

Now, Filipinos can breathe more easily—literally. And maybe there will be less of the paranoia that sees a SARS carrier in every person who sneezes and a spreader in every resident of Vacante or Maybocog, the barangay in Maydolong, Eastern Samar, where JP comes from.

This does not mean the disease has been licked, much less that it will not happen again. While the number of cases has gone down in many other countries, SARS continues to rage in China where more than 3,000 people have been stricken down by the disease and 139 have been killed so far. Just as bad is the news that the development of a vaccine may take at least a year.

Thus vigilance, caution and care should be the watchword for everyone. It isn't time to let our guard down or sit on our hands. As President Macapagal-Arroyo put it, "We must anticipate the worst scenario so that we will not wake up to a crisis that is much bigger than we imagined."

It may be a heavy burden to those who are affected, but if a person or a place needs to be quarantined then the authorities should not hesitate to issue the order. If the law does not allow certain measures that are necessary to contain the spread of the disease, then Congress should hurry to pass the needed legislation.

In the meantime, the nation could do without the injection of politics into this problem. It doesn't help anyone to see a drift towards martial law in every stringent measure government puts up or proposes to deal with this life-and-death issue. A health catastrophe threatens the nation and all some people see is martial law creeping in. Paranoia over the exercise of power can be as deadly as the fear of SARS.

Winning the peace

IF it is serious about striving for democracy in the Middle East, the United States needs to realize that it may not like what first may arise there. The US must have patience and feeling for distinctions within the wide field of political Islam.

If it directs the process too much toward a secular, US-friendly regime, the efforts may backfire and lead to a new Lebanon.

It deserves to be repeated: winning the peace is more difficult than winning the war.

Expressen (Stockholm, Sweden)



A warning on herbal medicine

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz



ONE positive effect of the SARS scare is that we are saving a lot of taxpayers' money and precious foreign exchange which at this time of the year would ordinarily be wasted on numerous junkies by government officials. Usually almost all the congressmen and senators are traveling abroad now on one pretext or another, all spending the people's money. The elite would also be abroad, as they wouldn't be caught dead spending summer in a backward country like the Philippines. Even those who can hardly afford it but are seeking status, would be in Hong Kong or Singapore so they can say that they spent their vacations abroad. They think that is how to achieve status.

The SARS scare has changed all that. Most of our legislators and other public officials are home, with the exception of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and especially former President Fidel V. Ramos who wants to eclipse the travel record of Marco Polo. All because it is now dangerous to travel, especially to SARS-infected countries. Just riding in airplanes is risky, not because of hijackers but because of SARS. The jetliner's cabin is one of the likeliest places to catch the SARS virus. It is a closed space; the air in it is circulated and recirculated again and again. If only one passenger is a carrier, he can spread the virus to all the other passengers. But so can riding in an air-conditioned bus, the MetroRail, or going to a movie house or a shopping mall, all of which are closed spaces with recirculated air.

Where is the best place to go this summer and avoid SARS? Somebody asked at yesterday's health forum at Annabel's in Quezon City, which dwelt principally on the hazards of air travel because of SARS. The answer to that question is this: Go to open spaces with plenty of sunshine, such as the beach. Sunlight kills the SARS virus within three hours. So stay in the sunshine in the beach resorts, not in the air-conditioned rooms and bars. But don't get sunburned.

As in any case of calamity, it is sad that there are unscrupulous people taking ad-

vantage of the SARS emergency, particularly the profiteers. The prices of face masks, alcohol and other disinfectants, and vitamin pills have skyrocketed as people rush to the drugstores to protect themselves. There was even a report in the media that a papaya extract being sold by an entrepreneur fights SARS.

Is this true? The doctors at the health forum were asked.

Their answer: There is still no known cure for SARS. There is no finding nor experiment done on papaya extract. So don't waste your money on it.

What about vitamin pills?

They don't cure SARS. They only strengthen your body's immune system so that it can fight the SARS virus better and all other viruses and bacteria that manage to enter your body.

So what drugs are given to SARS cases?

They are given only supportive therapy, to help their immune system to fight the SARS virus. But there is still no known drug that can kill it.

The best way to fight SARS is prevention, said the doctors. Improve your health by eating the right food and exercising regularly. Be more hygienic and sanitary. Wash your hands more often, with ordinary soap and water for at least five minutes each time, or with rubbing alcohol more quickly. Avoid touching your mouth, nose and eyes; that is where germs usually enter your body.

A sidebar on herbal medicine such as papaya extract. There are advertisements touting certain herbal medicines for various diseases:

ampalaya pills and tea for diabetes, mahogany seeds for high blood pressure, pito-pito leaves for all sorts of diseases, noni juice, etc. There are articles by prominent personalities attesting to the efficacy of some herbal medicines from personal experience. Any number of friends, relatives and co-workers swear that this or that herb has cured their illnesses.

Don't believe them, warn doctors. It is risky. While it is true that many drugs are extracts from plants and trees, the needed medication is carefully extracted from leaf, fruit, flower or bark. Tea from herbs or a cocktail of leaves, such as pito-pito, is a different thing, however. They may contain the desired medication, but you never know what other ingredients they contain. Some of them may be harmful to your health. Some may contain powerful toxins. Mahogany seeds were very popular allegedly in lowering blood pressure sometime ago until some people taking them died and it was discovered that the seeds contained dangerous toxins. The same may be true of other herbal medicines. Their sale is allowed by the government because they are classified as food supplements and not as drugs.

I had a friend touting the efficacy of a cocktail of algae and other ingredients advertised in the United States. It had made her more sprightly and banished all her aches and pains, she swore. Until it was discovered by laboratory examination that the cocktail contained, besides the algae and other ingredients, bacteria and other detritus such as cockroach and rat droppings.

So don't believe those stories of your well-meaning friends and relatives. The well-being they feel after taking the herbal medicine may be psychological and emotional. They have faith in the herb so they feel better, the same thing that a placebo does to certain patients.

If they feel better, so it must be good? Yes, so long as the herb does not contain harmful properties. But what if it does? You never know unless the herb or leaf is subjected to laboratory analysis. You can be slowly poisoning yourself with an herb you think is curing you.

Still, means and ends

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educate ourselves to work," or "we live to work." And more sadly, that is what consumes us to leave this country and look for greener pastures abroad. Buenavente's understated assumption is that it's not just that students unfortunately get to think that way. It's that schools systematically make them think that way.

It's an arguable premise. You find it in the utterances of school and education officials, in their definition of "competitiveness," which quite patently suggests a quality of education that makes graduates sufficiently attractive in the job market. You find it in the courses that are given priority in schools, chief of them the ones that offer to produce world-class managers rather than world-class philosophers. And you find it in the culture itself, in the assumptions or definitions of success, or class. The last often comes in the form of jokes. The one I heard recently has to do with the favorite coffee of students from various schools. Ate-neans prefer Starbucks, La Salleans Seattle's Best, and UP students Coffee Republic. University belt (or technical or vocational school) students prefer Kopiko.

It suggests, though with the bitter pill of laughter, that the ideal of education is to crash the Starbucks-Seattle's Best circuit, become the manager of a big company, and/or work abroad.

The inability of education to produce educated people, defined as those who like to ask questions about the world they live in, or as those who demand to serve the people rather than just themselves, was a favorite thesis in the 1960s and 1970s. The late great Renato Constantino wrote a whole series of essays on

it, which he collected in the book, "The Mis-education of the Filipino." The word "mis-education" says it all. Constantino argued that education did not just hide the past—it gave low priority to history and similar subjects—it carried all the myths of the past, myths about the making of this nation.

Education, while part of the solution, was also part of the problem. The reason many Filipinos had no sense of country was not that they did not go to school but that they did. They had been mis-educated.

That is the reason I say I would not be loath to see another burst of intellectual ferment light up the campuses worldwide—who knows, maybe the American wars of this decade will spark just that. But this is the part where I have to make serious caveats about Buenavente's thoughts. The most important of which is: Education may not stop. Even schooling may not stop—the better course would be for students and their parents—to protest their curriculum where they find them, well, the favorite word then was "irrelevant." But education itself may never stop.

The students who dropped out, or were kicked out, in the late 1960s and 1970s did not stop pursuing education. On the contrary, they did so with exceptional zeal. Most of them read voraciously and debated with each other and with their teachers and school officials—which was how they often got kicked out in the first place. Which is the vital point here: Education doesn't just happen inside school, it happens after school, outside of school, at every point in our lives. Much of that education may not land you a desk in one of the gleaming towers in Ayala, much of that education may only lead you to despair, like the betrayed Florante, about the "labas at loob ng bayan kong savi." But it will at least help you to look back at life one day and not ask yourself bitterly what the hell you did with it. All you can remember is that all your waking moment, you were busy using your precious human substance to acquire things, among them mistresses. It will at least help you see means and ends.

That makes all the difference.

A test of Asean collectivity, too

LEADERS of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, together with China's Premier Wen Jiabao, are holding an emergency summit in Bangkok to forge a common front in battling the SARS epidemic, the worst viral scourge to attack the region and its worst crisis since the Asian financial meltdown in 1997.

The presence of the Chinese premier underlines the fact that the biggest economic power in the region has closed ranks with its smaller neighbors as China takes the heaviest toll in the region—with 2,914 cases, 131 of whom have died.

The Philippines is among the Asean countries that have the lowest casualties from the epidemic—three confirmed cases with two deaths, according to the latest World Health Organization report. Indonesia has one reported case, who has recovered. Malaysia has six cases, with two deaths and two recoveries; and Thailand, seven cases, with two deaths and five recoveries. In the high-toll list are Singapore with 199 cases, with 23 deaths, and 137 recoveries; and Vietnam, with 63 cases, five deaths and 53 recoveries.

Outside of Asean but within East Asia, Hong Kong comes next to China as the worst-hit country; the WHO report said Hong Kong had 1,557 cases, with 138 deaths, and Taiwan, with 66 cases and zero death.

But relief is sighted in the bleak horizon. The WHO reported, at the peak of the Asean summit, that the epidemic appeared to have peaked in countries outside China, in which 161 new cases have been reported. According to the WHO, "it appears from reports we have from Hong Kong, Singapore, Toronto (Canada) and Vietnam that the epidemic has peaked in those countries and now they're having fewer cases every day, and in some countries, no new cases, such as Vietnam."

Although no cure has yet been discovered for SARS, stringent, if not draconian health and quarantine measures, appeared to have checked the spread of the virus in the heavily stricken countries, excluding China which had covered-up the extent of the contagion since it was first re-

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila



ported last November.

The Philippines finds itself in the same situation in Asean as it was during the 1997 financial crisis. It was the least severely devastated in Asean in the financial meltdown and today, it has the lowest SARS casualty after Indonesia. The Philippines and Indonesia, however, have been afflicted by violence and bombings stemming from the conflict with separatist or religious extremist groups. But in Bangkok today, SARS is the sole and primary concern because SARS does not respect national frontiers.

SARS has proved to be a great leveler against which the big and the small nations of Asia find themselves equally vulnerable to its infection. The 1997 financial crisis weakened Asia economically and even politically. Asean could deal with the financial meltdown as a collectivity. Each member country fell back to its national policy and resources to counter the dislocation wrought by the crisis. Each country undertook financial reforms and sought financial relief by consulting with one another. In that crisis, it was as though Asean as a framework for regional cooperation did not exist or was in total disarray.

A semblance of collective action returned after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the United States, in which Asean joined the condemnation on terrorism, although in the US-led war on Iraq, only the Philippines and Singapore joined the American-sponsored "coalition of the willing" for the invasion of Iraq.

Perhaps because the Philippines has not been severely hit by the first wave of the SARS con-

tion, it had sought refuge in the belief that it was "SARS-free," and became a little too complacent until two deaths were reported recently. The deaths were a wake-up call which prompted the Philippines to catch up with the stringent measures installed by such countries as Singapore, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

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These draconian measures are effective especially in Singapore, which has a small population and is enclosed in a small territory, or in Vietnam, where the authorities there have autocratic control. This probably helps explain why, despite the high infection toll in those countries, they are able to arrest effectively the spread of the virus.

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Reading with the kids

LEARNING is a never-ending process. And it works both ways—for the learner and the teacher.

Perhaps that is why I stuck to teaching for 38 years and when I got into a second trajectory, writing a cooking column, it was a teaching column: how to prepare different dishes.

Today, in my 70s, I have retired from writing a cooking column but the learning process continues. This time reading with my grand-nephew, Noel, and grandnieces Nana and Mickey.

Noel, who is 6, is not into storybooks. One of the few storybooks he liked was "Mushrooms in the Rain," because we could act out the creatures crowding under an umbrella, a pretend mushroom growing in the rain.

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How much handling the favorite book has undergone is evident in the missing pages and tattered condition of the hardbound book.

Then we got hooked on butterflies. I had an old bag where I kept all the books I had collected on these topics which I brought along every time I came for a visit.

We learned among other things that butterfly eggs are the size of a pinhead and are not always round depending on the specie; that butterflies smell through their antenna; that butterflies start out as wriggly, hungry "worms" and metamorphose into beautiful, colorful butterflies; that butterflies can protect themselves from predators through such devices as natural camouflage (the color of leaves, for example); that it takes a spider one hour to spin a web.

One of Noel's favorite pictures in one of my butterfly books which he describes as "cool," is that of a little boy in overalls peering into his butterfly net to see if he had caught any butterflies. This would send him giggling. But he got the message: don't chase butterflies!

Together we have gone on field trips to the butterfly gardens at the Quezon Memorial Circle (now it's at the Manila Seedling Bank), at the Assumption in Antipolo, in Pulilan, Bulacan and in Subic.

There the kids saw not only varied colored butterflies but liberally splashed with floral cologne; they had the thrill of butterflies alighting on their heads, arms or clothes.

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This summer we have already had two topics of interest to pursue—ships and boats and seashells.

From the book "How Things Work, Ships, Boats, Submarines and Other Floating Machines," we saw different kinds of seacraft and got stymied, temporarily, by Noel's wondering out loud how come a ship does not sink when it's made of metal. A poser, he, thankfully, answered himself, "I know, I know. Because of the water pressure." The book, you see, contains simple experiments using everyday things like empty bottles and drinking straws to prove certain relevant facts.

The latest craze is seashells. Earlier, Nana, 8, had received a couple of shells from my sister's collection. She was brushing them with an old toothbrush when I dropped by recently. When they came over to spend the day we had to set aside the house rule: Do not touch the collectibles. But Nana and Noel handle my shells very carefully, cupping them in their hands as if they were treasures. Even my fragile sea urchin.

The two were especially excited when they saw an eggshell cowrie of Colgate toothpaste fame, in my collection.

This was when Nana dropped one of her "when you go" bombshells. "Lola Femy, when you go, when you die (she adds in a whisper), can you give me something to remember you by?"

"What?" I ask when I finally find my voice.

"Your shells."

Well, what else is new. Earlier it was, "Lola Femy, when you die, can I have your house? Ours is so old."

Anyway, with my books on shells we set out to identify among my shells: cowries from the tiny sigay or money cowrie we use for our Bingo games to the big tiger cowries our grandparents used when darning socks (a lost art), helmets, tritons, moon shells, cones (which they learn are poisonous), and what catches their imagination most, carrier shells or the original shell collector, shells which attach dead shells to their exterior.

Mickey, who is 11 going on 12, loves the big "Book of Jokes." She has made a collection for every day of the week, for example: What is the favorite day of the astronauts? MOONday. A joke, a knock, knock joke and a tongue twister.

I find it useful too. Noel has only one joke in his repertoire: Why did the chicken cross the road? I can now counter this with: Why can't the three bears enter the house? Because Goldilock(s) it. And I have a new knock, knock joke for him too: Knock, knock, Who's there? Tennis. Tennis who? Ten is half of twenty. He learns arithmetic.

Who knows what our next lesson will be? Noel is teaching me how to play chess and gleefully eats my pawn with a triumphant, "You didn't see that!" When I make a wrong move. Perhaps it will be on how to use the computer which they have learned without any "how to" manuals to befuddle them.

On one of my birthdays, one of my nephews gave me a book, "101 Ways to Stay Young" with this inscription: "To a Tita who never grows old."

My secret. Keep learning along with the kids. Better than any therapy.

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Protection at less than P1 a day

AT P22 a pack, "Lady," a newly launched oral contraceptive that comes in a distinctive yellow pack, provides protection against pregnancy for less than P1 a day.

Marketed here by DKT International, with support from USAID, "Lady" is a low-dose oral contraceptive that, because it contains the smallest effective amount of contraceptive substances, substantially lowers the risk of side effects usually associated with pills. As the product insert notes, because oral contraceptives work by mimicking pregnancy, a woman on the pill "goes through the same early signs of pregnancy including nausea, heaviness of feet, dizziness, minor weight gain, etc." Though these side effects usually disappear within one or two months when the woman's body gets adjusted to the substances, these sometimes lead women to shift to another brand of pills or to another method, or stop using contraception altogether. With a low-dose pill like "Lady," the risk of side effects should be considerably reduced.

"Lady," then, addresses two major issues cited when women are asked why they refrain from one: have stopped using contraception—cost and fear of side effects.

Let's tackle the first issue.

Even before "Lady" was introduced in the market, the cheapest brand of oral contraceptives sold for P50 a pack. Even at this price, it wasn't a major expense, considering what many Filipinos look on as "essentials" for decent living, apart from food, clothing, shelter and sex, of course.

How much is a pack of cigarettes, for instance? Hope, the "masa" brand costs P25, while the higher-end Marlboro rerails for P30. A lapad of Ginebra San Miguel sells for P24.50, while a bottle of San Miguel Beer can be bought for P12.50 (all prices care of the corner grocery). Clearly, a man who smokes or drinks can certainly afford to buy his wife or himself protection from an unwanted pregnancy.

WHAT about the things a woman would consider "essential"? A manicure goes for at least P50 these days, and if you pair that with a weekly pedicure, we're talking at least P400 a

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David



month. But if you, like me, have become addicted to foot spas, one procedure will set you back at least P400. Not to mention shelling out tips for the staff.

A movie ticket costs P60, although if you enjoy movie watching in upscale malls, a ticket is easily double that amount. And the popcorn ain't free. You'll also need P20 for an FX ride to the mall. Even dreaming, while free, demands you disburse P10 for every lotto ticket if you want those dreams to come true.

Let's move on to the issue of side effects. Dr. Jondi Flavies, who's with FriendlyCare Foundation and whom I spotted at the "Lady" launch and lassoed into an impromptu interview, says that because different brands of contraceptive pills have different formulations, a woman will experience different side effects of varying severity. It's only a question of finding the brand that best suits you, the one to which you're most "hiyang," Flavies said.

So instead of giving up on contraception entirely when one brand of pills gives you terrible migraines, the better course of action should be to go back to your nearest health center or clinic, tell the doctor, nurse or midwife your complaints and ask for either a different brand of pills or another method of contraception.

THE PILL, even a low-dose brand like "Lady," is not for every woman, or even for a pill user as she gets older. If you're more than 40 years old, a heavy smoker, or suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, clotting disorders, migraine, asthma, epilepsy, TB, jaundice, heart and liver diseases, then the oral contraceptive pill might not be your

method of first choice, at least without consulting a doctor first. And if you're not in a monogamous long-term relationship, then you might not need to be on a "long-term" family planning method. In fact, if you are into casual sex, then you'll certainly need protection from sexually transmitted infections as well, which only the condom can provide.

The good news is that there are so many other modern methods of family planning available. Even better news is that over the long term, these methods will prove to be even more "cost-effective" than the pill.

AT FRIENDLYCARE clinics, for instance, a woman or couple can obtain information, counseling and commodities at very reasonable prices. For the "Standard Days Method," a couple need only pay P60 for a consultation and P60 for the "necklace" which will help them keep track of the woman's safe and unsafe days. Injections, which provide protection against pregnancy for up to three months, cost P60 initially for the consultation plus P50-60 per injection, which brings the monthly cost to no more than P20.

FriendlyCare charges P250 for counseling and insertion of an IUD, although the device itself comes free courtesy of the Department of Health. Considering that an IUD provides up to 10 years of protection, that amounts to only P25 for every year of protection!

Initially, the option for a permanent method, whether for a tubal ligation or a vasectomy, might seem expensive. At FriendlyCare a procedure costs P3,060, though the expense can be charged to PhilHealth. But given that it's permanent, and so could protect you from pregnancy for 20 or even 30 years, the monthly cost could range from P8.50 to P12.75!

Clearly, neither cost nor fear of side effects should deter a man, woman or a couple from using a family planning method of their choice. All it needs is a belief in responsible parenthood and sexual behavior, and the right order of priorities for one's life and for one's family.

Open letter to SARS czar Dayrit

SECOND only to the President, you bear the heaviest responsibility in the country today with the magnitude of the work ahead, unknown, just like SARS. Each in his own way, we will cooperate in whatever you do in this fight.

We have already stepped forward by calling a spade a spade, done with the "denial" stage. For a while we thought you were doing a China.

Now we all know: the symptoms, the countries involved, the figures each day, and for us Filipinos the sad tales of our four SARS cases. So aware is everybody that our maid, seeing a man with a mask in his balcony, blurted, "Ma'am may SARS ata doon!"

But what we still don't know is some basic information and the guarantee of its dissemination in Filipino, English and the vernaculars.

What telephone numbers can we call; what hotlines; what help can we expect? I hastily jotted down 7417048 before it disappeared from the TV screen, but beyond that, I must scour the PLDT directories.

What hospitals can we go to in the city and in the provinces? The Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM) and San Lazaro have been named but exactly where are they located? San Lazaro may be a household word but who heard of RITM till now?

What are the capabilities of these hospitals? With a billion-peso standby fund, how many protective suits do they have, how many masks, gloves, etc., how much medicine in stock, how many doctors, nurses, caregivers (our present heroes, by the way); how many can be accommodated?

Where can we buy N95 masks? I copied telephone numbers posted at MMC for SARS masks. Yes, the lady on the other end said, We have model 8710 at P200 each and model 8210 (the recommended N95) at P250, but the N95 is out of stock. Even Mercury stores are "out of stock." So,

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

where, oh where, and at what price, how can Juan and Juana de la Cruz buy even one mask?

How long is the recommended length of quarantine at the airport, at home, of communities? Seven, 10, 14 days? What can and cannot be done in quarantine? Is it true that alcohol and chlorox will help? That we must take a lot of Vitamin C and E? What about outfits who offer services to make homes "SARS-free"?

Maybe we can't do anything about the virulence of SARS. That's not in our hands. Talk to people and they'll say they're more afraid of SARS than the war. Iraq is peanuts; at least we know where it is. But SARS is "strike anywhere" and with no known medicine—yet.

But we can do something about at least three factors that are in our hands. To nip contagion before it starts: the airport, our behavioral culture and media, are crucial. The first two demand discipline and the third must be aggressively harnessed.

No doubt about it, the airport (and the seaports too) is the entrance gate for SARS. Our OFWs who will trickle or pour back home are the main carriers. With maximum understanding for whatever reasons they come back, they must be thoroughly checked or quarantined before they fan out into every corner of the Philippines. Of our four confirmed cases, "three came from abroad while one [was due to] local transmission." Are all arrivals given guidelines and hotlines as claimed? What is this we hear of about lackadaisical check-ups? "All must be found" says WHO and the airport is the starting point.

By now, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon whom I much admire must be sorry for that thoughtless suggestion enticing tourists to come over, like what—for 30 pieces of silver? In fact we should perhaps bar tourists from SARS-hit countries.

Considering our behavioral culture, surveillance and the law must be merciless. Filipinos are known to be pusit and lusot artists, lovers of family and clan, social beings who must pasyal and party, believers of bahala na, optimists who believe anybody else can get it, but "not me," masters in making light of serious matters ("The virus can't stand our pollution and the heat"). We will find ways to evade the law and we will circulate until caught or infected.

The information drive needs no less than a media blitz—tabloids, TV, radio, movie houses, posters, leaflets. "But we don't want the people to panic." Lame excuse. Harness the wordsmiths in media and advertising who will package a campaign that will allay fears, spread information, not paranoia, and determine the frequency of dissemination to avoid overkill. They will know what to do. Emily Abrera, we need you.

A czar's "sweeping powers" can bring together the principal players in this drama: suppliers, media and ad gurus, printers, etc. for a coordinated campaign.

I shudder to think what could happen if SARS spreads. Let's not even talk of squatter colonies, but of crowded districts like Paco, Sampaloc, Tondo.

Jaime Cardinal Sin has turned to prayer. Many hope for divine intervention, but only when we do what we have to do. By the way, what is this sinister rumor that the SARS virus was genetically produced?

Asuncion David Maramba is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to manda@info.com.ph; fax 8210659

A test of Asean collectivity, too

LEADERS of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, together with China's Premier Wen Jiabao, are holding an emergency summit in Bangkok to forge a common front in battling the SARS epidemic, the worst viral scourge to attack the region and its worst crisis since the Asian financial meltdown in 1997.

The presence of the Chinese premier underlines the fact that the biggest economic power in the region has closed ranks with its smaller neighbors as China takes the heaviest toll in the region—with 2,914 cases, 131 of whom have died.

The Philippines is among the Asean countries that have the lowest casualties from the epidemic—three confirmed cases with two deaths, according to the latest World Health Organization report. Indonesia has one reported case, who has recovered. Malaysia has six cases, with two deaths and two recoveries; and Thailand, seven cases, with two deaths and five recoveries. In the high-toll list are Singapore with 199 cases, with 23 deaths, and 137 recoveries; and Vietnam, with 63 cases, five deaths and 53 recoveries.

Outside of Asean but within East Asia, Hong Kong comes next to China as the worst-hit country; the WHO report said Hong Kong had 1,557 cases, with 138 deaths, and Taiwan, with 66 cases and zero death.

But relief is sighted in the bleak horizon. The WHO reported, at the peak of the Asean summit, that the epidemic appeared to have peaked in countries outside China. In which 161 new cases have been reported. According to the WHO, "It appears from reports we have from Hong Kong, Singapore, Toronto (Canada) and Vietnam that the epidemic has peaked in those countries and now they're having fewer cases every day, and in some countries, no new cases, such as Vietnam."

Although no cure has yet been discovered for SARS, stringent, if not draconian health and quarantine measures, appeared to have checked the spread of the virus in the heavily stricken countries, excluding China which had covered-up the extent of the contagion since it was first re-

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

ported last November.

The Philippines finds itself in the same situation in Asean as it was during the 1997 financial crisis. It was the least severely devastated in Asean in the financial meltdown and today, it has the lowest SARS casualty after Indonesia. The Philippines and Indonesia, however, have been afflicted by violence and bombings stemming from the conflict with separatist or religious extremist groups. But in Bangkok today, SARS is the sole and primary concern because SARS does not respect national frontiers.

SARS has proved to be a great leveler against which the big and the small nations of Asia find themselves equally vulnerable to its infection. The 1997 financial crisis weakened Asia economically and even politically. Asean could deal with the financial meltdown as a collectivity. Each member country fell back to its national policy and resources to counter the dislocation wrought by the crisis. Each country undertook financial reforms and sought financial relief by consulting with one another. In that crisis, it was as though Asean as a framework for regional cooperation did not exist or was in total disarray.

A semblance of collective action returned after the Sept. 11 terrorist attack on the United States, in which Asean joined the condemnation on terrorism, although in the US-led war on Iraq, only the Philippines and Singapore joined the American-sponsored "coalition of the willing" for the invasion of Iraq.

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tion, it had sought refuge in the belief that it was "SARS-free," and became a little too complacent until two deaths were reported recently. The deaths were a wake-up call which prompted the Philippines to catch up with the stringent measures installed by such countries as Singapore, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

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HIGH BLOOD

Eufemia C. Estrada

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtiesomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

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month. But if you, like me, have become addicted to foot spas, one procedure will set you back at least P400. Not to mention shelling out tips for the staff.

A movie ticket costs P60, although if you enjoy movie watching in upscale malls, a ticket is easily double that amount. And the popcorn ain't free. You'll also need P20 for an FX ride to the mall. Even dreaming, while free, demands you disburse P10 for every lotto ticket if you want those dreams to come true.

Let's move on to the issue of side effects. Dr. Jondi Flavie, who's with FriendlyCare Foundation and whom I spotted at the "Lady" launch and lassoed into an impromptu interview, says that because different brands of contraceptive pills have different formulations, a woman will experience different side effects of varying severity. It's only a question of finding the brand that best suits you, the one to which you're most "hiyang," Flavie said.

So instead of giving up on contraception entirely when one brand of pills gives you terrible migraines, the better course of action should be to go back to your nearest health center or clinic, tell the doctor, nurse or midwife your complaints and ask for either a different brand of pills or another method of contraception.

THE PILL, even a low-dose brand like "Lady," is not for every woman, or even for a pill user as she gets older. If you're more than 40 years old, a heavy smoker, or suffer from high blood pressure, diabetes, clotting disorders, migraine, asthma, epilepsy, TB, jaundice, heart and liver diseases, then the oral contraceptive pill might not be your

method of first choice, at least without consulting a doctor first. And if you're not in a monogamous long-term relationship, then you might not need to be on a "long-term" family planning method. In fact, if you are into casual sex, then you'll certainly need protection from sexually transmitted infections as well, which only the condom can provide.

The good news is that there are so many other modern methods of family planning available. Even better news is that over the long term, these methods will prove to be even more "cost-effective" than the pill.

AT FRIENDLYCARE clinics, for instance, a woman or couple can obtain information, counseling and commodities at very reasonable prices. For the "Standard Days Method," a couple need only pay P60 for a consultation and P60 for the "necklace" which will help them keep track of the woman's safe and unsafe days. Injectables, which provide protection against pregnancy for up to three months, cost P60 initially for the consultation plus P50-60 per injection, which brings the monthly cost to no more than P20.

FriendlyCare charges P250 for counseling and insertion of an IUD, although the device itself comes free courtesy of the Department of Health. Considering that an IUD provides up to 10 years of protection, that amounts to only P25 for every year of protection!

Initially, the option for a permanent method, whether for a tubal ligation or a vasectomy, might seem expensive. At FriendlyCare a procedure costs P3,060, though the expense can be charged to PhilHealth. But given that it's permanent, and so could protect you from pregnancy for 20 or even 30 years, the monthly cost could range from P8.50 to P12.75!

Clearly, neither cost nor fear of side effects should deter a man, woman or a couple from using a family planning method of their choice. All it needs is a belief in responsible parenthood and sexual behavior, and the right order of priorities for one's life and for one's family.

By now, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon whom I much admire must be sorry for that thoughtless suggestion enticing tourists to come over, like what—for 30 pieces of silver? In fact we should perhaps bar tourists from SARS-hit countries.

Considering our behavioral culture, surveillance and the law must be merciless. Filipinos are known to be pusit and lusot artists, lovers of family and clan, social beings who must pasyal and party, believers of *bahala na*, optimists who believe anybody else can get it, but "not me," masters in making light of serious matters ("The virus can't stand our pollution and the heat"). We will find ways to evade the law and we will circulate until caught or infected.

The information drive needs no less than a media blitz: tabloids, TV, radio, movie houses, posters, leaflets. "But we don't want the people to panic," I hear excuse. Harness the wordsmiths in media and advertising who will package a campaign that will allay fears, spread information, not paranoia, and determine the frequency of dissemination to avoid overkill. They will know what to do. Emily Abrera, we need you.

A czar's "sweeping powers" can bring together the principal players in this drama: suppliers, media and ad gurus, printers, etc. for a coordinated campaign.

I shudder to think what could happen if SARS spreads. Let's not even talk of squatter colonies, but of crowded districts like Paco, Sampaloc, Tondo.

Jaime Cardinal Sin has turned to prayer. Many hope for divine intervention, but only when we do what we have to do. By the way, what is this sinister rumor that the SARS virus was genetically produced?

Asuncion David Maramba is a retired professor, book editor and occasional journalist. Comments to murda@info.com.ph; fax 8210659

Open letter to SARS czar Dayrit

COMMENTARY

Asuncion David Maramba

SECOND only to the President, you bear the heaviest responsibility in the country today with the magnitude of the work ahead, unknown, just like SARS. Each in his own way, we will cooperate in whatever you do in this fight.

We have already stepped forward by calling a spade a spade, done with the "denial" stage. For a while we thought you were doing a China.

Now we all know: the symptoms, the countries involved, the figures each day, and for us Filipinos the sad tales of our four SARS cases. So aware is everybody that our maid, seeing a man with a mask in his balcony, blurted, "Ma'am may SARS ata doon!"

But what we still don't know is some basic information and the guarantee of its dissemination in Filipino, English and the vernaculars.

What telephone numbers can we call; what hotlines; what help can we expect? I hastily jotted down 7417048 before it disappeared from the TV screen, but beyond that, I must scour the PLDT directories.

What hospitals can we go to in the city and in the provinces? The Research Institute of Tropical Medicine (RITM) and San Lazaro have been named but exactly where are they located? San Lazaro may be a household word but who heard of RITM till now?

What are the capabilities of these hospitals? With a billion-peso standby fund, how many protective suits do they have, how many masks, gloves, etc., how much medicine in stock, how many doctors, nurses, caregivers (our present heroes, by the way); how many can be accommodated?

Where can we buy N95 masks? I copied telephone numbers posted at MMC for SARS masks. Yes, the lady on the other end said. We have model 8710 at P200 each and model 8210 (the recommended N95) at P250, but the N95 is out of stock. Even Mercury stores are "out of stock." So,

where, oh where, and at what price, how can Juan and Juana de la Cruz buy even one mask?

How long is the recommended length of quarantine at the airport, at home, of communities? Seven, 10, 14 days? What can and cannot be done in quarantine? Is it true that alcohol and chlorox will help? That we must take a lot of Vitamin C and E? What about outfits who offer services to make homes "SARS-free"?

Maybe we can't do anything about the virulence of SARS. That's not in our hands. Talk to people and they'll say they're more afraid of SARS than the war, Iraq is peanuts; at least we know where it is. But SARS is "strike anywhere" and with no known medicine—yet.

But we can do something about at least three factors that are in our hands. To nip contagion before it starts: the airport, our behavioral culture and media, are crucial. The first two demand discipline and the third must be aggressively harnessed.

No doubt about it, the airport (and the seaports too) is the entrance gate for SARS. Our OFWs who will trickle or pour back home are the main carriers. With maximum understanding for whatever reasons they come back, they must be thoroughly checked or quarantined before they fan out into every corner of the Philippines. Of our four confirmed cases, "three came from abroad while one [was due to] local transmission." Are all arrivals given guidelines and guidelines as claimed? What is this we hear of about lackadaisical check ups? "All must be found" says WHO and the airport is the starting point.

Assembly 'survey' is an old trick

THE FIRST day of the resumption of Congress' session after Holy Week greeted us with the news that a "national survey" showed a majority of Filipinos supporting the convening of a constituent assembly to amend the Constitution. (PDI, 4/20/03) The problem here is that the group that came up with the data didn't say who did the survey, what sampling methodology it used, and generally, how reliable its so-called survey was.

Similarly, an unidentified source also reportedly claimed that 10 senators already support the constituent assembly idea and they need only two more. But we know that all these is an old propaganda trick: announcing something that cannot be checked, and hope that it generates a bandwagon effect. We should be wary of such political surveys because such "studies" are so easily misinterpreted, twisted, spun and used to deceive the larger public. (Of course, we also know that stringing together the word "according to," "recent" and "survey" gives

more weight to even the emptiest of propositions.)

The reality is quite different however. The forces ranged against the House assembly proposal are formidable. President Macapagal-Arroyo, 14 senators, and most civil society and media leaders support elections for a Constitutional Convention (ConCon) at the time of the 2004 elections. Other leaders including former President Cory Aquino and Jaime Cardinal Sin publicly oppose the proposal and its twin, NOEL (No Elections). Despite this, the House passed a constituent assembly resolution by a large margin.

What considerations can break the overwhelming advantage of the constituent convention proposal in public and political leader support? Speaker Jose de Venecia and the other assembly architects—Sen Ed Angara and Danding Cojuangco—refuse to bury the assembly proposal because it is being held in reserve in case the presidential maneuvers do not produce

the political arrangement most favorable to their interests.

For the first time since the ratification of the 1987 Constitution 16 years ago, there is near universal consensus on the need to amend the Constitution. A combination of reformers from all walks of life, and politicians who are unhappy with the existing political system all agree on constitutional reform. If this historic opportunity to make far-ranging political reforms is missed this time, it may be six or more years before the process can be started again. De Venecia and Angara played key roles in sustaining the momentum for Charter change in the past year. It would be ironic if they were the ones who killed Charter change because they refused to give up on an assembly proposal that should have been buried together with NOEL a long time ago.

—JOEL ROCAMORA,
executive director,
Institute for Popular Democracy,
Citizens for ConCon 2004



Are we ready for a worst-case SARS scenario?

I AM a concerned citizen worried about the impact of a SARS epidemic in our country and would like to call the attention of our government especially the Department of Health to the danger of having the San Lazaro Hospital care for SARS victims.

SARS is a highly contagious disease. Why do our government officials want to make San Lazaro run the risk of being quarantined (like some hospitals in Beijing and Taipei due to the number of SARS patients), when there are many indigent patients sick of other kinds of illnesses in the same complex and depending on its facilities? The vast population outside the premises of San Lazaro would also stand the risk of being contaminated and doesn't this mean a real danger to the rest of Metro Manila?

Wouldn't it be better if one isolated building inside the Quezon Institute on España Extension is dedicated to SARS patients or some such facility which would ensure containment and control? I dread the day when our country will have a crisis equal, if not surpassing, that of Hong Kong.

If a place like Hong Kong, which has the financial resources to care for its SARS victims and pump money into businesses affected by the SARS crisis, is feeling the strain from this epidemic, it could be worse for us in the Philippines where the local officials in Alcala, Pangasinan are already having a difficult time feeding and enforcing the quarantine in their barangay with their limited resources. Can you imagine the hysteria if the barangays surrounding San Lazaro have to be quarantined?

Are we prepared and ready for this type of a calamity? Why not act before it is too late?

—SYLVIA TI,
itma@info.com.ph

We must stop stealing

I AM a proprietor of a small-town hardware store. As such, I am privy to how business is transacted by many local officials. Reading Dr. Alejandro W. Clemente's "Do not steal" article (PDI, 4/30/03) strikes a resonant chord in me as I have seen the many hocus-pocus done by these officials.

It is no wonder that the poorest among the poor are found in the far-flung barangays. These people whom the idealists call the backbone of the nation are more burdened by the shameful yoke of corruption in the government than all the El Niños and locust attacks combined.

My recent encounter with this hanky-panky was with an NGO project for women's health. The store received a canvassing form for a bid on materials and on that same day a lady, who I found out later to be the barangay president in the NGO project, came to collect the canvassing form.

But because there were several items I had to research on, I offered to submit the sealed bid by myself to the office the following Monday to spare her any inconvenience. However, she insisted on getting it because she said she had to submit it right away or else the funding for it would be forfeited. That was a Saturday and therefore no offices were open.

When she couldn't get it the second time she came (after 30 minutes), the lady wanted to withdraw the canvassing form, filled up or not, as her husband, the barangay head, had told her we would no longer take part in the bidding.

By then, I could already guess what they were up to especially when, the husband himself

showed up in the store and scolded us for being sloppy in filling up the form.

I submitted the bid personally. Luckily for us, the NGO office conducted the bidding in accordance with its ideals and policies for providing better health to marginalized women in Mindanao. Aboveboard, no deals, no cuts unlike government biddings.

The two, it was proven later, conspired to a *lutong-macao* deal for a cut. But they were not lucky that time.

In short, I was awarded the bidding.

After calling us names in their anger, the couple wrote us a letter asking for an outright 10-percent commission.

Corruption at this level is simply a microcosm of a systematic rot in our midst. Yes, Dr. Clemente, the only way to move forward is for the government, business and the citizenry to answer in the negative the question you raised: Shall we or shall we not steal?

When corruption is practiced by those above you, the realization of how widespread and taken for granted it is, hits you twice harder. Dr. Clemente said it right that Filipinos only pay lip service to calls for discipline, unity and service as they maneuver to find ways to enrich themselves. There are enough accounts out there to convince all of us.

But despite these, the country could still move forward for we still have a very rare species who do not steal. I know. I have met them, as a store owner and a former teacher in a prestigious school in the past.

—FLOR S. TEMPLE,
Misamis Oriental

Correct amount of German debt condoned

THANK you for featuring the accomplishments of the government in the April 24 issue of the *Inquirer* ("Germany condones P82M in debt deal") on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' RP-German Community Forestry Project in Quirino province, which was instrumental in the recent cancellation of a sizeable part of the Philippine government's debt to the Federal Republic of Germany.

However, allow us to clarify that what was cancelled was not only P82 million but P371.9 million. For instituting the successful community-based forestry program for upland communities in Quirino, the German government cancelled part of the country's debt to Germany, amounting to DM12,775,044.82 (US\$7,087 million) or P371.91 million.

The debt cancellation was a result of the RP-German Consolidation Agreement signed on July

30, 1992 under the Debt-for-Nature Swap Initiative Program (DFNSIP) and the Separate Agreement signed on Oct. 31, 1996 for the implementation of the project under the auspices of the DENR.

The agreement calls for the writing off of the debt through the utilization of 30 percent of the debt amount or DM3,832,512—equivalent to P82 million—as funding for the Quirino project before the end of March 2003.

So instead of paying Germany P82 million as part of the entire P371.9-million debt which was not incurred necessarily by the DENR but by the national government—Germany allowed the Philippine government to use this amount to fund the forestry project from July 1999 to March 2003 in 10 barangays in the municipalities of Maddela, Nagnipunan, Aglipay and Diffun.

The project implemented mea-

sures for the protection of the environment and the sustainable use of the natural resources in Quirino, with emphasis on biodiversity conservation, sustained through the efforts of local communities.

The success of the project has stirred international interest as a model project since this was the first German debt-for-nature swap program for the forestry sector worldwide.

Environment Secretary Elisea G. Gozon hopes to strike similar debt-for-nature swap ventures with other countries to reduce our country's debt, ensure sustainable management of the environment and help local communities at the same time.

—IRMA S. PAULME,
officer in charge,
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and Natural Resources,
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The World

Editor Luverne B. Gueco



AN IRAQI schoolboy walks past a pile of unexploded mortar rounds in a field in Basra, Iraq, April 28. The field, which lies next to a field where children play soccer, is filled with the rounds left behind by the fleeing Iraqi Army.

US troops fire on Iraqi crowd, kill 15—Al-Jazeera

BAGHDAD—Al-Jazeera television reported on Tuesday that US troops had fired on a crowd west of Baghdad, killing 15 Iraqis, as the United States announced it was sending more troops to boost security in the capital.

The report by the Arabic satellite television station could not be independently confirmed. It said 50 people were also wounded in the shooting at Falluja, 50 km west of Baghdad.

US forces announced they were holding Saddam Hussein's veteran oil minister, Amir Muhammad Rasheed, whose wife is bioweapons scientist Rihab Taha—widely known as Dr. Germ.

He was number 47 on a US list of the 55 most wanted members of Saddam's administration and the six of spades in a deck of cards issued to American troops hunting former Iraqi leaders.

The United States has now captured 14 of those on the list.

Leading Iraqis agreed at a meeting on Monday with the US administrator of postwar Iraq to

hold a conference within four weeks to choose an interim government, ushering in democracy after three decades of Saddam's iron rule.

But US forces still face pockets of resistance and have had problems asserting control in some parts of Iraq. They said they killed at least six Iraqi fighters in the northern city of Mosul during a heavy firefight on Monday evening.

Al-Jazeera, which is based in Qatar, said US soldiers fired on a crowd after someone threw a stone at them.

The channel, which is widely watched across the Arab world, did not specify the source of its information.

US Central Command in Qatar said it had no information and US

Army commanders in Baghdad were not available to comment.

Jazeera's Baghdad correspondent said up to 200 people had finished Muslim evening prayers at a mosque and answered a call by preachers to protest against US troops in Iraq.

US troops were widely welcomed for overthrowing Saddam Hussein but many Iraqis are now anxious for them to go home.

The US military said in Baghdad it was moving reinforcements to the capital.

Major General Glenn Webster said 3,000 to 4,000 infantry and military policemen would be sent over the next seven to 10 days.

The United States already has 12,000 troops in Baghdad, with 150,000 more in other parts of Iraq.

"The coalition command is the single authority in Iraq at this time and our purpose is to provide security and stability in the country so the people of Iraq can elect their own leaders and get

the country running again," Webster told reporters.

He said this was not connected to any specific incident.

US Central Command in Qatar said in a statement that former oil minister Rasheed had surrendered on Monday. It gave no details.

Rasheed ran Iraq's military industries until becoming oil minister in 1995. His wife, known as "Dr. Germ," is not on the most wanted list but US forces are keen to interview her about her role in Saddam's alleged attempts to develop biological warfare systems.

Rasheed was last seen by journalists at Baghdad's Doura oil refinery on March 25, surrounded by burning pits of oil as bombs fell on nearby Baghdad.

Saddam's fate remains a mystery. His sons Qusay and Uday have also not been found, nor have the weapons of mass destruction which the United States said were a major justification for the war.

Reuters

Iraqis pledge to install interim gov't in 4 weeks

BAGHDAD—As Iraqi leaders agree to try to form an interim government within a month, thousands of angry Shiites rallied demanding more influence over the country's future.

The Baghdad meeting of around 250 delegates with Jay Garner, the retired US general running Iraq, took place Monday, on the 66th birthday of toppled president Saddam Hussein, whose fate and whereabouts remain a mystery.

It also coincided with a trip to the Gulf by US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who said US forces in the region could now be reduced.

Delegates in Baghdad agreed to hold a national congress within four weeks to elect the first Iraqi government since the fall of Saddam's regime on April 9.

The assembly, however, was split over the duration of the US occupation of Iraq.

"Hopefully, we will have this national meeting that will select or elect the interim authority," said Zalmay Khalilzad, the US envoy to Iraq's emerging political movements.

"The decision here was to do the government within four weeks. There's a strong message to the coalition from the participants that an Iraqi government needs to be formed as quickly as possible," he said.

Shiite and Sunni religious leaders, Kurdish officials, tribal dignitaries, farmers and businessmen joined longtime exiles at the meeting, the second in a series of gatherings to map Iraq's political destiny.

"It is our responsibility to start the process of the birth of democracy in Iraq here today," Garner told the assembly.

But there were sharp divisions within the assembly over the duration of the US occupation, as well as the role Islam should play in a new government.

While some, including many exiles, ap-

peared to favor a quick US exit, others who endured Saddam's brutal rule were skeptical over their own readiness to lead the nation.

"We here prefer the Americans to rule us in the interim period. We are not ready to handle this yet," said Suheil al-Suheil, a Baghdad lawyer. "Saddam's orphans are still alive." President George W. Bush vowed to see Iraq through to a full democracy, and said the US-led occupation was already improving the lives of Iraqis.

"Iraq can be an example of peace and prosperity and freedom to the entire Middle East," he said in a speech to a primarily Arab-American crowd in Dearborn, Michigan, where there is a large Iraqi community.

"It'll be a hard journey, but every step of the way, Iraq will have a steady friend in the American people," he said.

Bush's speech was aimed as much at the Middle East as the US Midwest.

Yet many Iraqis have expressed frustration over the US-led military occupation, as well as the lack of a firm date for the forces to leave.

"We thank the forces that have freed us from the dictatorship," said tribal leader Hussein Shaanan, "but now we'd like them to leave as soon as possible."

The Baghdad meeting had tremendous symbolic power for many Iraqis, falling on the day that has normally been reserved for massive state-backed demonstrations to mark Saddam's birthday during his 24-year dictatorship.

Joyous crowds in the Sadr neighborhood of Baghdad celebrated the orchestrated past birthday celebrations, dressing up a donkey as Saddam.

"For the first time in my life, I won't be forced to attend Saddam's birthday ceremonies. He was a dictator, he was nothing but a donkey ruling over Iraq," said Ali, a 24-year-old.

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Wahid defends singer

JAKARTA—Former president Abdurrahman Wahid has come to the defense of hugely popular Indonesian singer Inul Daratista, whose dance style has been condemned as erotic by several Muslim leaders.

Wahid was answering criticism from Islamic preacher and rock star Rhoma Irama, who has branded Inul's dance style as "haram" or forbidden by the religion.

Wahid—himself a Muslim cleric—said Irama was obstructing freedom of expression in the name of religion, Tuesday's Media Indonesia daily reported. Islamic authorities in several provinces have banned Inul from performing. But Wahid said Inul's dance was part of her artistic expression and was not illegal. AFP

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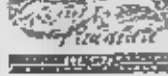
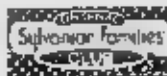
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An unidentified Afghan boy marches during a military parade in Kabul, April 28. The parade was held to mark the toppling of the government headed by Mohammad Najibullah on April 28, 1992.

AP

Nokor: Talks useless without US concessions

SEOUL/WASHINGTON—North Korea said on Tuesday more US-North Korea talks would be pointless if Washington insists Pyongyang disarm and rejects the North's offer to scrap its atomic arms in return for concessions.

US officials in Washington and Western diplomats in Beijing said on Monday North Korea had offered at talks in China last week to give up its nuclear weapons and missile exports but wanted a shopping list of concessions in return.

A senior US official called those concessions unacceptable.

"We're not going to pay for elimination of nuclear weapons programs that never should have been there in the first place," said State Department spokesperson Richard Boucher in Washington.

Predictably, that did not go down well in Pyongyang.

"It is quite obvious that as long as the US maintains such a stand, the two sides will only waste time no matter how frequently they negotiate," said Minu Jason, a newspaper published by the North Korean cabinet.

North Korea's KCNA news agency went further, saying Washington's stance that it will not "reward" Pyongyang was a mark of ignorance among Bush administration policymakers.

"This cannot be construed otherwise than ridiculous jargons of political imbeciles," it said. "These silly remarks only go to prove that US policymakers are totally ignorant of the DPRK."

DPRK are the initials of the North's official

name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The US State Department said on Monday North Korea told US officials in Beijing during three days of talks last week, that included China, that Pyongyang had nuclear arms.

Western diplomats briefed by a Chinese Foreign Ministry official in Beijing said North Korea had warned of "extraordinary measures" if the United States played its "usual tricks."

Asked about the briefing, US Secretary of State Colin Powell said: "They did put forward a plan that would ultimately deal with their nuclear capability and their missile activities but they of course expect something considerable in return."

A senior US official said North Korea offered to give up nuclear weapons and scrap its ballistic missile program in exchange for US concessions including oil, energy, economic exchanges and normal relations.

South Korean Foreign Minister Yoon Young-kwan confirmed in parliament on Tuesday North Korea had offered to resolve the nuclear crisis on condition Washington guarantees the survival of Pyongyang's communist system. He did not comment on the offer.

Yoon will brief foreign diplomats later, and they will be particularly keen to gauge whether Seoul leans toward Beijing's assessment of the outcome of Washington's. China now faces its own dilemma—whether to back long-time ally North Korea or back the US line on dismantling Pyongyang's declared atomic arsenal. Reuters

Menem, rival in Argentina vote showdown

BUENOS AIRES—Former playboy president Carlos Menem will run off against a rival from his Peronist party in a second round vote to decide who will lead Argentina out of economic crisis.

Menem won most votes in Sunday's first round, but the 24.34 percent was not enough to claim an immediate victory and he must now battle Nestor Kirchner, a provincial governor backed by outgoing president Eduardo Duhalde, on May 18. Kirchner drew 21.99 percent of the vote.

While Kirchner's camp promised an all-out onslaught, the 72-year-old Menem said he was coming back to "rescue the country from disaster."

"Sixteen months ago, this presidential candidate and current president—because I already consider myself as such—was condemned and defamed, without a fair trial," he told supporters at a Buenos Aires hotel after the vote closed.

Menem spent 167 days under house arrest while authorities investigated charges of illegal weapons sales to Ecuador and Croatia during his presidency.

As president between 1989 and 1999, Menem imposed strict international Monetary Fund-style economic policies. He is identified with a period in Argentina's history when the currency was pegged to the dollar and unemployment was low.

But some also accuse him paving the way for Argentina's economic collapse. Others say Menem's presidencies were synonymous with scandal, corruption, and badly managed privatization.

Kirchner's finish forced neoliberal economist Ricardo Lopez Murphy (16.35 percent), social Christian candidate Elisa Carrio (14.15 percent) and 14 other candidates out of the competition.

Voter turnout was high, at 80 percent of the 25.5 million voters, despite predictions of apathy in this crisis-weary country with growing

India, Pakistan PMs talk on phone in sign of thaw

NEW DELHI/ISLAMABAD—The prime ministers of India and Pakistan discussed by phone on Monday ways to improve relations, in the first high-level talks between the nuclear-armed rivals since they came close to war last year.

A Pakistani government statement said Pakistani Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali also invited Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to visit Islamabad.

"The telephone call breaks the 18-month-old impasse between the two countries," the statement said.

India and Pakistan have not held formal talks since July 2001 and came close to war last year over disputed Kashmir, mostly Hindu. India's only Muslim-majority state.

Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf and Vajpayee met informally at a regional summit in Kathmandu in January 2002.

Official sources in New Delhi declined comment on the invitation to Islamabad but said Jamali had telephoned Vajpayee to welcome his offer earlier this month to hold peace talks.

"The two prime ministers discussed ways of moving forward bilateral relations," one Indian official source said of the 10-minute conversation.

"Prime Minister Vajpayee suggested in this context improvement of economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, people-to-people contacts and civil aviation links," he said.

"They agreed to consider this as a start."

India and Pakistan severed road and air links and downgraded their embassies after an attack in December 2001 on India's parliament which New Delhi blamed on Pakistan-based Kashmiri separatists. Islamabad denied involvement.

Both countries have been under intense pressure from Washington to ease tensions.

Earlier this month Vajpayee said he was willing to have talks with Pakistan, but said Islamabad would first have to end support for Muslim militants based in Pakistan-controlled territory, fighting Indian rule in Kashmir.

Pakistan denies Indian allegations that it helps militants infiltrate into Indian Kashmir to join a 13-year-old separatist revolt there and says it gives only moral support to what it calls the Kashmiri "freedom struggle."

The Pakistan government statement said that Jamali welcomed Vajpayee's offer of talks "and reiterated Pakistan's readiness for a dialogue with India at any level."

It said Jamali had said he hoped such a dialogue would address all outstanding issues, including Kashmir. He invited Vajpayee to visit Pakistan and also offered to visit India.

Indian analysts said the tentative thaw in relations might reflect pressure from Washington, which is sending Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage to the region next month, but that full peace talks were still a long way away. Reuters

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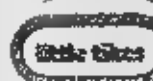


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SC affirms death penalty on traders' kidnappers

By Delmar Cariño
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—Finding no reversible error, the Supreme Court here affirmed the death penalty imposed on seven persons charged with kidnapping a businessman from Isulan, Sultan Kudarat seven years ago.

In an en banc decision, the SC also ordered Abdilla Silongan, Macapagal Silongan, Akmad Awal, Rolly Lamalan, Sacaria Alon, Jumbrah Manap and Ramon Pasawilan to pay trader Alexander Saldana and his friend Americo Rejuso Jr. P250,000 in moral and nominal damages for the abduction on March 19, 1996.

The seven accused, together with 61 others, were charged before the Sultan Kudarat regional trial court after their arrest when they failed to secure a ransom of P12 million from the trader's family.

The Department of Justice, however, asked the SC to transfer the case to any of Quezon City's special crimes court.

Beyond doubt

On Jan. 18, 1999, the Quezon City court found the accused guilty beyond reasonable doubt but the seven asked the SC to reverse their conviction.

They said they were not clearly identified as the perpetrators of the crime when the case was tried before the lower court.

Fifteen armed men took Saldana, Rejuso and two companions, Ervin Tormis and Victor Cinco, from the mountains of Barangay Laguilayan in Isulan following an aborted business meeting supposedly arranged by one Macapagal Silongan, one of the accused.

Tormis and Cinco later escaped but Saldana and Rejuso were moved from place to place and kept captive until Sept. 24, 1996 or after more than six months.

The two were released to the military in exchange for a relative of one of the kidnappers who was caught delivering a ransom note to Saldana's family.

In its 22-page decision, the SC dismissed the plea of the accused to be acquitted on the ground that one of the victims identified their

captors with wrong names.

"That Rejuso Jr. does not know the names of the abductors is not sufficient to cast doubt on his testimony," the decision said.

"It is not necessary that the name of the accused be specifically stated by a witness in an affidavit or in his testimony."

The court said: "Victims of crimes cannot always identify their assailants by name. It is

inoperative, however, that the attacker be pointed out and unequivocally identified during the trial in court as the person who committed the crime."

The SC noted that the two victims had a lot of opportunities to see the faces of their captors since they had lived with them for six months and that "the kidnappers made little or no attempt to conceal their identities."



WAR AND DROUGHT

The parched earth is all that is left of this farmer of Maigo town, Lanao del Norte, site of a battle between government soldiers and Moro rebels. Hundreds of displaced families are facing a long drought.

EDWIN BACASMAS

158 religious icons seized from buyer

By Jhunnex Napallacan
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—The Intelligence Division of the Cebu Provincial Police Office (CPPO) seized on Monday from an antique dealer 158 religious icons, most of which were believed to have been stolen.

This was a breakthrough in the series of unsolved church thefts here.

After the successful operation, representatives from the different churches in Cebu, Leyte and Bohol went to the police headquarters to find out if icons from their churches were among those now in police possession.

At least three of the seized icons were positively identified to have been stolen from the parish churches in the Cebu towns of Garcar, Dalaguete and Badian.

Senior Insp. Bienvenido Premne, CPPO intelligence officer, said they have prepared charges of violation of the anti-fencing law against antique dealer Rory Bacus, a resident of 402 Bullones Compound, Bontores Street, Barangay Basak Mambaling, Cebu City.

Bacus was temporarily held for questioning but was later freed pending the filing of charges against him.

Bacus' apartment was raided by Premne's team at around 6 p.m. Monday after Municipal Trial Court in Cities Branch 7 Judge Francisco Seville Jr. issued the search warrant in the same day.

The police conducted the raid after following last week's seizure of ten religious icons from workers identified with Bacus. Two of the earlier seized icons were found to have been stolen from churches in Bohol.

Seized in last Monday's operation aside from the 158 antique icons were 15 crucifixes, 15 assorted heads of statues, 63 pieces hands of statues, 7 antique angels, 4 antique communion plates, 6 assorted old crowns, 4 assorted old robes, 6 pieces bronze chalices and 4 antique candle holders.

Premne said they could not determine the value of those items because these were considered priceless.

Premne said Bacus told the police that the icons will be delivered to some buyers in the United States, but the transactions were made through the Internet.

Last April 25, Premne's team also confiscated 10 antique icons from Bacus in Mandaue City. Church officials from Inabanga, Bohol, claimed two of the icons.

Since Monday, officials from Leyte and the different churches in Cebu trooped to CPPO to also claim their icons.

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START

SARS BRIEFS

No N-95 masks in Baguio

BAGUIO CITY—The arrival of stocks of N-95 masks, worth P500 each, intended for Baguio hospitals has been delayed for two weeks, alarming doctors who have begun attending to suspected Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) cases. An overseas Filipino worker was confined at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center for testing, while two more patients were referred to the hospital by a private clinic last weekend. "Most of the nurses detailed to Baguio deal with patients based in the Cordillera, La Union and Pangasinan, but they have not been provided proper health guidelines in responding to this disease," an Inquirer source said.

Vincent Cabrera, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

Indian woman has SARS symptoms

BAGUIO CITY—Local officials on Monday considered an Indian woman, who spent a month in Thailand, a serious medical case after he suffered from atypical pneumonia. City officials received from local epidemiologists complete medical files on the woman, who arrived in Baguio on April 26. She had voluntarily asked for treatment at the Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center (BGHMC). Initial examinations found traces of atypical pneumonia, a symptom of SARS, although health officials here denied that the Indian was a potential SARS victim. "The patient needs to exhibit all the symptoms for doctors to conclude that this is a SARS case," a member of the city epidemiological surveillance unit told the Inquirer.

Vincent Cabrera, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

IRRI denies SARS cases

LOS BAÑOS, Laguna—The International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) has denied reports that it has any cases of SARS at its headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna. In a press statement, IRRI denied allegations that the institute had received visitors from overseas who might have contracted the disease. "There are no SARS cases at IRRI," the statement said. All IRRI staff members have been told to postpone travel to any SARS-affected regions including China, Taiwan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Singapore and Toronto.

Romulo O. Pantoja, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

No kissing of Manaoag statue

MANAOAG, Pangasinan—With fears of contamination from the SARS virus, a church official here asked devotees of the Our Lady of Manaoag to avoid touching or kissing the image or wiping it with their handkerchiefs. The directive, issued by Fr. Patricia Apa, Manaoag parish priest, and approved by Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz, would cover other images in the shrine that thousands of devotees from all over the country visit everyday. Apa, however, said devotees could still touch the clothes of the image. He said he issued the directive to prevent the possible spread of SARS among pilgrims and churchgoers. Some norms during masses were also changed to avoid the possible spread of the SARS virus. These include receiving communion by hand, instead of mouth, and bowing, instead of kissing, each other during the "peace ritual."

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

State of emergency in Palawan

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—Palawan has been declared under the state of emergency to prevent the entry of SARS in the province. According to Gov. Joel Reyes, his declaration is in support of the measures undertaken by the Department of Health and other government agencies. With this, he said, stringent measures will be implemented in the province for travelers, including those who use the backdoor near Malaysia and other Asian countries. The provincial council issued a resolution granting the governor the power to declare the province under the state of emergency. Vice Gov. David Ponce de Leon said the measures should detail technicians on the pre-departure areas in the pier or airport. Those who would not follow the stringent rules, he said, should be meted with more coercive measures.

Jotelle Tesoria, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

SARS SCARE

Residents try anything to cope

By Frank Cimatu
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

BAGUIO CITY—In the absence of any cure for or even proper information on Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), residents here are trying anything that works or just to assuage their panic.

Bernie Villena bought two large papayas at the city market because he said he learned on television that papaya might be effective against atypical pneumonia.

When asked how papaya could be effective, Villena said: "My family will eat it, *siguro* (maybe)."

Dr. Luc Montagnier, president of the Paris-based World Foundation for AIDS Research and Prevention, recommended using an extract of fermented papaya to boost immunity probably against SARS. The extract also boosts anti-oxidant qualities although the treatment is not yet backed by research or tests.

This meant that Villena would have to ferment the papaya to make it probably effective.

Montagnier met with Pope John Paul II in Vatican last September and asked the 83-year-old Pope to relax his stand on condoms to tackle AIDS in the developing world.

But he also took the opportunity to suggest fermented papaya as a cure for the Pope's Parkinson's disease.

Mane Bistoyong, a local fruit vendor, said there is no dramatic rise in papaya sales here.

Bistoyong said they throw away the overripe papaya, which is the best way to get the papaya extract recommended by Montagnier.

Baguio writer Landa Grace Carillo, in her weekly column for a local daily, said she received an e-mail from a friend in Indonesia about a possible SARS cure.

Carillo, in her column, said the "anti-SARS mixture" consists of ginger, lemon, honey and prayers.



A CUSTOMER in one of Baguio's bars covers his face with a piece of sanitary napkin, providing comic relief on the SARS scare in the city.

TOOTS SOBERANON/PDI NORTHERN LUZON

The e-mail from her friend follows:

"Our Blessed Mother told Joseph Francis in October 1986 that there would soon be a flu-like illness that will cause many, many deaths. This illness will affect the lungs and the heart."

"Our Loving Mother gave us this advice: 1/2 garlic clove crushed, two slices ginger root chopped, a tablespoon lemon juice, a teaspoon honey."

"Crush 1/2 of large garlic clove and the slices of fresh ginger root and put into a cup. Add one tablespoon lemon juice and one teaspoon honey in the cup. Pour boiling water into the cup and let the mixture set for at least five minutes (Do not boil mixture)."

"We are to drink this every day, about one hour before bedtime. If one already has the symptoms, they are to drink a cup of this three times a day."

"A garlic pill or capsule (from health stores) may be substituted if one cannot take fresh garlic. If there is an aftertaste or garlic breath, one should eat a few sprigs of fresh parsley."

In Baguio City, only a few residents wear respirators or surgical masks on the streets. Those who do, however, are not wearing the N95 respirators recommended by the World Health Organization.

According to the Department of Tourism, there was a drop of 40 percent in airplane occupancy to and from this city compared to last year. This may be because of the danger of SARS transmission in enclosed air-conditioned areas, like an airplane.

But a driver of a bus company here said there was no drop in passengers taking aircon buses. Taxi riders in the city should count their blessings that there is

no need for air conditioning because of the cool climate.

But text messages here said the SARS virus will not survive in Baguio because of the polluted air, alluding to the World Bank report that the city's air is among the most polluted in the country.

The used clothes trade is another industry suffering from talks about SARS. But this is not because of the erroneous report that the virus thrives on used clothes (SARS' corona virus can survive outside a host for three hours and the wagway stocks coming from Hong Kong take weeks or even months to reach the city).

Unlike the *ukay-ukay* in other places, the used clothes here are bought directly in Hong Kong by Baguio businessmen. Since SARS became prevalent in Hong Kong, *viageros* started to fear going there and buy used clothes.

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ROUNDUP

Tremors in Davao

DAVAO CITY—Mild tremors hit this city and some parts of Southern Mindanao on Saturday and Sunday nights. The mild quake at around 11 p.m. Saturday night was also felt in General Santos City. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said the tremor, measured at intensity 3 in General Santos City and intensity 2 here, was tectonic in origin. On Sunday night, an intensity 3 quake was also felt in Davao City, with its epicenter in Talomo District. Philvolcs science analyst Ferdinand Taglucop said no injuries and damage to property were reported. **Dennis Jay Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau**

New medical center

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo on Saturday inaugurated the modern Subic Bay Medical Center (SBMC) here. Romulo, citing efforts of the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority to provide a "state-of-the-art" medical facility for investors and residents, said the SBMC is "far off better than other medical institutions" in the country. Dr. Harry Badion, SBMC director, said the center will offer specialized medical services, including heart bypass operations and possibly organ transplants. **Allan Macalino, PDI Central Luzon Desk**

Police exec exits

CAMP OSCAR FLORENDO, San Fernando City—Chief Supt. Arturo Lomibao relinquished his post as regional police director of Ilocos on Friday after more than two years in office. His successor is Chief Supt. Claudio Cabreros, formerly the deputy director of operations of the Philippine National Police. Cabreros, 31 years of military and police service included being the provincial commander in Mindanao in the early 1990s and deputy director of the Cordillera regional command. **Gia Damaso-Duma, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau**

Marijuana arrests

BAGUIO CITY—Police arrested two men in Sagada, Mt. Province, last week on charges of possession of 2.75 kilograms of marijuana. Arrested were Dakuyan Gaid and Jake Mamma Solang, both of Kalinga. Reports said policemen took the suspects to the Sagada police station on a theft complaint. While questioning them, the police inspected their bag and found the marijuana bricks, worth P68,750, inside it. **PDI Northern Luzon Bureau**

Suspected abductor

BAGUIO CITY—Police last week arrested a suspect in the abduction of a German couple in Ifugao last year in Tabuk, Kalinga. Reports identified the suspect as Amor Gubliangan, 27, Gubliangan, police said, is the fourth most wanted criminal in the Cordillera. The suspect, according to a press statement from the Cordillera police office, belonged to the group that abducted a German couple and their driver along the Bontoc-Banaue Road in Mt. Polis, Ifugao, on April 21 last year. Gubliangan was charged with kidnapping and serious illegal detention. **PDI Northern Luzon Bureau**

Benefits for vets

CALAPAN CITY—Twenty-one veteran survivors here received plaques of appreciation and the news that they and their dependents will be receiving hospitalization benefits. The veterans were part of some 400 members of the Veterans Federation of the Philippines who celebrated the 61st Araw ng Kagitingan in Naujan, Oriental Mindoro last April 9. Gov. Bartolome Marasigan praised the veterans' courage during World War II. **Madonna T. Viola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

Youth summer job

CALAPAN CITY—Some 500 poor students and drop-outs, who wish to continue with their studies, started working in nine Oriental Mindoro towns last April 21 under the Special Program for Employment of Students of the Department of Labor. According to provincial employment service officer Antonio Magnaye Jr., the usual 40 workdays have been reduced to 15 days because of limited funds to accommodate more students. Those who were not admitted this year would be prioritized next year, he said. **Madonna T. Viola, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau**

Pipe organ concert

THE 34-YEAR-OLD pipe organ of the San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City will be blessed and launched on May 2 after a Mass to be led by Lipa Archbishop Gaudencio Rosales. This will be followed by a pipe organ concert featuring organists Armando Salarza, priests Fr. Manny Marfori, Fr. Bong Panganiban and Rodol Garcia together with the Festival Choir of Las Piñas, St. Scholastica's College Chamber Orchestra and the Seraphim of Lipa City, will follow inside the Cathedral. Considered rare, the pipe organ's rehabilitation took over two years at the cost of P3.3 million. Tickets for the event are available at the Cathedral office tel. no. (043) 981-11-60.

'Lumad' folk urge GMA to order stop to logging

COTABATO CITY—Tribal leaders all over Mindanao are asking President Macapagal-Arroyo to order a stop to the logging operations in the towns of North and South Upi in Maguindanao.

Antonio Lumandong, National Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of the Philippines secretary general, said the Maguindanao Coastal Logging Corp. (MCLC) started its operations in the two towns without consulting the affected Teduray and Lambangan lumad.

The former Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao Secretary Faisal Karon gave MCLC, an Industrial Forest Management Agreement holder, the authority to operate on Feb. 13, 1998.

Lumandong said they were informed of the logging operation that covers about 5,500 hectares of their Ancestral Domain only when operations started in November last year.

To date, Lumandong said the firm has already cut down at least 200 logs.

He said they want President Macapagal to implement a total log ban in North and South Upi to protect the remaining forests.

"Native Teduray and Lamban-

gan are suffering from extreme violation of their rights to ancestral domain, self governance and empowerment, social justice and human rights and cultural integrity," Lumandong said.

Romy Saliga, administrative officer of the Lumad Development Center Inc., an organization in South and North Upi that looks

into the plight of indigenous peoples, said they were not against any development if it would benefit the majority.

"In the case of MCLC, we do not find any development to the environment and to the people especially those directly affected by the logging operation. It will only intensify the already marginalized

situation in the area. It will likewise endanger the lives of the people and the lives of those yet to be born," Saliga stressed.

Victoria Kanakan, executive director of the Office for Southern Cultural Communities in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, emphasized in her letter dated April 2 to Gov. Parouk

Hussin and Regional Legislative Assembly Speaker Ibrahim Ibay that Karon's approval of the logging operation was a violation of the Free and Prior Informed Consent embodied in Republic Act No. 8371, or the Indigenous Peoples Rights Act of 1997. Rosa-May V. de Gusman, PDI Mindanao Bureau



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Batangas residents complain of foul odor

By Mei Magsino
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

BATANGAS CITY—Residents of Barangays Tabangao, San Isidro, Wawa and Sta. Clara in this city have complained of frequent emissions of foul odor from the Pilipinas-Shell refinery in Barangay Tabangao.

The foul odor, according to residents, has raised the incidence of respiratory diseases among the villagers, especially the children, who have inhaled the foul odor that they suspect came from the oil refinery.

Saturino Cuiat, 63, a barangay kagawad of Wawa, said they have already petitioned the city council to act on the problem that they have been suffering for years.

The odor seemed to spread more often this summer, causing pain in their nasal cavity, throat, chest and head.

Over 100 residents of Wawa, who have also been affected by the foul odor, signed the petition.

Denial

Robert Malabanan, Shell refinery's community and government liaisons officer in the Shell Tabangao refinery said his company has no hazardous emissions.

"Our studies have proven that there are no hazardous emissions from our refinery. The odor that the residents have complained about is categorized under the intermittent industrial odor that happens not only in refineries but also in all industrial operations," Malabanan said.

He added that the rising temperature this summer could have caused the rapid evaporation of their products that caused the emission of the foul odor.

"That has no proven health hazard," Malabanan said. "If that odor is hazardous, the 50 senior officials living in Shell's housing facility should have been the first ones to complain. And we would never expose our own people to that kind of danger."

Nebulizer

Eugenia Caraan, 34, another barangay kagawad of Tabangao Aplaya, said the residents in her barangay have bought one nebulizer each, as every family in her barangay has at least two people who have asthma.

At the nearby barangay of San Isidro, Boyet Mallibiran, a resident has also complained of the same foul odor that has been the culprit for the increased respiratory ailments among his village mates.

He said the Shell Philippines Exploration had conducted an investigation of the foul odor three years ago and found that the odor did not come from them.

Tinga said the company is doing everything it can to lessen, if not to totally remove the foul odor.



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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Editor Jun Bandayrel • Bureau Chief Rolando B. Fernandez

Veggie farmers in Mt. Province, Benguet do it 'the natural way'

By Maurice Malanes
Baguio City

FIVE kilograms of ginger, a liter of beer, a kilo of crude sugar, a liter of gin, and crushed chili and neem fruit. These ingredients appear to be another cocktail concoction at your favorite bar.

But these are the ingredients for a potent but environmentally safe pesticide and fungicide, which a natural farming trainer had taught recently to some farmers in Mt. Province.

Inspired by the natural farming technology trainer, 41 farmers from the vegetable-producing villages of Bauko town have enlisted in a multipurpose cooperative, which seeks to produce and market naturally grown vegetables.

Determined to practice what they learned, these farmers prepared a total of 30 hectares distributed in various villages and planted these with the usual cash crops—potatoes, cabbages, carrots and other tropical vegetables. But they have to grow these "the natural way"—no chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Both farmers and officials from Benguet and Mt. Province have been seeking a way out of a crisis, which has been hurting both provinces' almost 100-year-old vegetable industry after imported and smuggled vegetables have flooded the local markets since last year.

For Mt. Province, Gov. Sario Malinas said it was time for farmers to start discovering the market niche of a few but growing "natural farming" advocates in the country, who now have expanding exclusive outlets for more expensive but healthier produce.

Manuas thus invited Andry Lim, president of the Tribal Mission Foundation International, a group promoting natural farming technology and healthy living in Davao City, to talk to farmers in Mt. Province.

In March, Lim came to Barangay Sadsadan, a vegetable growing community in Bauko, to show alternatives to the chemical-saturated farming methods of local farmers.

'Green revolution'

Endorsers of the Green Revolution of the 1960s and 1970s had preached on high productivity through high inputs of chemical fertilizers and pesticides.

Since the 1990s, agro-chemical distributors have been disposing of each year an average of 500 tons of fungicides, 500,000 liters of pesticides and almost 15,000 tons of commercial fertilizers worth P500,000 in Benguet and Mt. Province's vegetable belt, said a farm supply dealer.

Manufactured by 15 major multinational companies, the volume of fertilizers disposed of each year in Benguet and Mt. Province is enough to wipe out all the United States-led coalition forces and Iraqi soldiers combined, claimed a researcher who studied the patterns of pesticide use in the local vegetable industry.

The various methods and technology that were supposed to ensure high yield through high inputs proved deadly to the environment and to human health, Lim said.

A phenomenon in Benguet and Mt. Province that agriculturists call "pest succession" reinforces Lim's observation.

Pesticides, for example, eliminated the leafhopper, a cabbage pest, only to be succeeded by the diamond-back moth, a more destructive pest.

The average vegetable farmer in Benguet and Mt. Province sprays his 90-day cabbage crop 12 to 21 times, depending on the infestation. He also mixes "cocktails" of three to six brands of pesticides and fungicides, believing that the more mixture is made, the more it will be effective.

But like human reaction to antibiotics, pests also develop resistance to pesticides, say experts. Diamond-back moths, for example, have developed such resistance to pesticides.

Pesticides have also eradicated beneficial animals and insects, which feed on pests, thereby compounding the pest problem.

Frogs, for example, are vanishing, if not extinct, in Loo village in Buguan, Benguet's top vegetable-growing town, noted a study by the Center for Policy and Development Studies of the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna. Frogs are considered farmers' best friends because frogs feed on insects.

Chemical fertilizers and pesticides also tend to strip the soil of its natural nutrients, Lim said.

Regaining loss

Lim showed various indigenous ways to regain not only soil nutrients lost after decades of chemical farming, but also how to help bring back vital microorganisms, which, he said, help condition soil for plant growth.

Here's one soil conditioner recipe, which, Lim said, farmers themselves could make in their own homes and farms:

- Put 1 kg of cooked rice in an 8-1/2-inch by 11-inch by 3-inch box or inside a big foot-long bamboo pole open on one end.
- Cover the box or bamboo with a clean sheet of paper and tie with a string.
- Cover the box or bamboo with plastic to keep out rainwater, insects and rats.
- Place under forest or bamboo leaves or coconut husks.

- After three days, remove the rice, which is now full of molds.
- Place in a clay jar the moldy rice and mix it with a kilo of crude sugar.

- Cover the jar with a clean sheet of paper and tie it with a string, and place the jar in a cool and shaded place.

After seven days, the jar's contents will yield a mud-like juice, much like the Igrot tapuy or rice wine.

A farmer has to mix two tablespoons of the concoction with a liter of water and spray it on the soil and plants. The concoction could help revive soil nutrients and speed up composting, said Lim.



A VILLAGER checks the giant chair in Barangay Alinguigan, Ilagan, Isabela which was made to promote the local furniture making industry.

BEN MOSES EBREO

Ilagan folk present 'Botaka ni Goliath'

VILLAGERS in Barangay Alinguigan in Ilagan, Isabela, have created a giant armchair called *botaka* in a bid to promote the town as the center of the furniture industry in the province.

The armchair, called the "Botaka ni Goliath," is made of narra and rattan, and measures about 5.5 meters (18 feet) long and 3.0 m (10 feet) high.

The furniture makers of Barangays Alinguigan 2nd and 3rd started making the giant armchair in January and finished it last month. It will be officially presented to the public on May 4.

"We want other provinces to know that this is our furniture specialty," said furniture maker Ching Bagumo.

Last year, Mayor Delfino Albano

met all furniture makers in the town and presented the idea to promote the local furniture industry.

Albano provided the raw materials while other furniture makers contributed from P200 to P500 each for additional materials to create the giant *botaka*.

Furniture makers grouped themselves and volunteered to finish the giant armchair.

The symbols of a saw, hammer, chisel and the slogan "Ilagan Kilos Nai" have been engraved on the chair's arm support.

Residents said the product would serve as an attraction for local and foreign tourists to visit the town, appreciate and patronize its furniture industry.

At least 1,600 board feet of uncut wood were used in the giant armchair.

"The most difficult part of it was the first stage. We called it *baiso*. We had to use two chain blocks to assemble the

body. It was heavy, each part required a group of men to carry," said Fidel Padayuman, 54, a furniture maker.

Padayuman said that during the assembly stage, 15 men had to carry the chair's feet and arms.

"Our problem now is how to transport the giant armchair without destroying it," he said.

The furniture makers also used steel bolts and nuts to connect the arms and feet to the body.

Padayuman said the *botaka* is one of the products easily sold to local and foreign tourists. Furniture makers sell the *botaka* at P1,500 apiece, but it is sold for P3,000 in Metro Manila.

"We made the giant *botaka* to encourage buyers to come to our town," said Rogelia Bucag, a furniture maker.

Albano said the giant *botaka* symbolized the Ilagueños' "ingenuity, zeal and good attitude." Ben Moses Ebreo and Villamor Visaya Jr.

Sexmoan to Sasmuan: Town regains reputation as fish capital

By Tonette Orejas
Sasmuan, Pampanga

FROM shame to fame. Sixteen years after shedding the name that stuck from the wrong pronunciation by Spanish and American colonizers, Sasmuan, formerly Sexmoan, is regaining its status as Pampanga's fish capital.

On May 4, the *consignacion* (market stall holders) and the Sasmuan Fishpond Owners and Operators Association are laying out a feast of bangus (milkfish), tilapia, shrimp, prawns, crabs and *dalag* (mudfish) for all to try and buy at the town plaza in Santa Lucia.

Patis (fish sauce), *ekto* (shrimp paste), the cholesterol-rich *tabang talangka*, and the native sweets *povoron* (milk candies) and *marapan* (cashew nougats) are also coming out in hundreds of bottles and boxes all on the same day, according to Mayor Catalina Bagasina.

The day is set aside for what is touted as Sasmuan's fish festival.

Bagasina said the event, held for the

first time in decades in this ancient coastal town on the Pampanga delta, is a way of celebrating the success in reclaiming the old name and its increasing stature in fishery production.

In Central Luzon, the aquaculture in Pampanga still has the highest value, with Sasmuan significantly contributing to that despite the yearly bouts of residents against flooding and siltation.

As an aquaculture town, Bagasina said it was hardly referred to now as Sexmoan. "Years ago, a mere inquiry by a buyer on the place where the fish supply came from was enough to embarrass the vendor because the name made it sound like we were a lusty people," the slightly

amused mayor recalled.

But even as the colonizers' blunder made it as the town's official name, which then appeared in practically every public document most especially in maps and election records, she said the residents had always asserted their town's name as Sasmuan.

Early settlement

Situated along the water routes south of the Pampanga River that spilled into the Manila Bay, Sasmuan, together with Macabebe and Lubao, is believed to be one of the oldest settlements in Pampanga and thus one of the seats of the early Pampanga civilization.

A study by historian Donn Hart showed that the fishing town did not fall into the Philippine plaza complex pattern followed during the Spanish period.

While it became the hideout of Filipino revolutionaries during the Spanish regime, the Americans captured Sasmuan in May 1899.

How its name got distorted always draws interest.

The town's brochure explained: "Long before the coming of the Spaniards to the Philippines, the original name of the town was Sasmuan, which was derived from old Pampango word 'sasmo,' meaning *pitabnuan* and its English translation is meeting place."

"Unfortunately, since the Spanish regime and during the American occupation, the name of the town degenerated to Sexmoan. Sometimes it is pronounced as 'Sexmoan' and indeed Sexmoñeros are embarrassed and ridiculed for they are jokingly branded as sexy."

Sasmuan did not only lose its name. Its identity was eventually subsumed when the American civil government made the town a mere village of neighboring Guagua town.

Don Monico Mercado, who was elected as the first representative of Pampanga to the First Philippine National Assembly, authored the law creating Sasmuan as an

independent town on May 4, 1908.

The town's "independence" is celebrated as the Don Monico Day, in honor of Mercado.

Bagasina said the fish festival was held in memory of Mercado. As a poet and writer, Mercado took under his wing a number of talented young men, including the late President Diosdado Macapagal and the late Rep. Amado Yuzon.

While Mercado reclaimed Sasmuan's autonomy, it was former Pampanga Rep. Emigdio Lingad III that corrected the colonial mistake in 1987. The announcement on the Senate's approval of a resolution restoring the name Sasmuan was met with a daylong celebration in the town.

These historical events "shaped us," Bagasina said, adding that "even the town's name figured as a serious matter to us because it was our identity that was at stake."

What matters now, she pointed out, was carving a future in fisheries production in a town that has no available land devoted to rice farming.

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Now that...

From page A1

graphically isolated or insulated from the rest of the world is archaic at the least. The interdependence of economies must become the basis for the new public health order. Where people, ideas, products and services cross borders at lightning speed, so will microbes.

Hence, we should have proceeded from the assumption that the arrival of SARS was inevitable. We needn't have waited for its actual landing. We could have, we still can, prepare our people for the possibility of more difficult times ahead. Our leaders must have the courage to bring people to a point where individual short-term sacrifices must be made for long-term social and economic benefits. SARS now, perhaps some other virus later: It makes no difference.

Our own experience shows that nations don't need to be infected to be affected. Even before the first SARS death in the Philippines, airlines were already reporting sharp drops in the number of their passengers, companies were canceling trips to Manila and investors were scaling down their expectations of economies and businesses everywhere.

But let's not assume that the economic impact of SARS is defined by physical territory alone. We are a nation dispersed throughout every nook and cranny of the planet. And regardless of where Filipinos are, it is incumbent upon the State to use its sovereign powers to the extent that it can to protect its people, wherever they are. Filipinos are not just people who live in the Philippines.

Inevitably, our economic losses will be related to how job markets for Filipinos here and abroad may—if we don't act now—shrink even more.

Beatable disease

Second, we should stress that SARS can be beaten. Despite what doom-mongers predict, the human race will survive this disease in the same way that it has survived many other diseases in recent history.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States have isolated the virus and mapped its genome in fantastically record time. Even as we wait for an antidote, people by their natural immune systems are beating the virus every single day. More than 95 percent of people found with SARS will survive the disease. Just as important, we also know that the SARS virus can be avoided.

As with HIV/AIDS, both the stigma and the risk associated with SARS can be erased by simple, reasonable adjustments in behavior and lifestyle. Fidelity to a single partner, safe sex, the avoiding of drugs and the screening of blood for transfusion can guarantee people of safety from HIV/AIDS.

Because it is spread by a virus similar to and likely mutated from the organism that brings the common cold, our weapons against SARS are even simpler: Keep your resistance up by eating properly, exercising regularly and getting plenty of rest. Wash your hands. Dispose of garbage properly, attend to your personal hygiene and keep the environment clean.

In the same breath, I must add that it is simplistic to imply that major public health problems like HIV/AIDS or SARS can be solved by changing people's behavior alone. In any disease outbreak, the importance of reformed, responsive and high-quality health care systems cannot be understated. The presence of a diagnostic kit, a cure or even a vaccine for HIV/AIDS or SARS will not ensure that these tools for fighting disease will be readily available to those who need them most.

Timely information

Third, we must provide people with timely and relevant information about the disease, especially at this time in the natural course of the disease when the paralysis brought about by SARS is caused by great uncertainty that results in fear and in some instances even panic.

Further study, I believe, will bear this out: People are afraid of SARS not so much because it can cause death. They are afraid because of the realization that SARS infections immediately and directly translates to micro-economic problems: loss of jobs and loss of economic opportunities.

Given the choice, our people will put their economic interests above personal safety. This is a matter of survival. Our government should do no less, because it is also a matter of survival for our leaders. As the experience of China and Hong Kong shows, the political leadership, not just the health sector, is being put to the test.

The fear of economic loss, defined as the inability to work, the loss of freedom and autonomy to earn enough to support one's self and one's family, is perhaps the single most compelling force that will spell the difference between SARS as a national calamity that could cripple the economy or SARS as a national opportunity to sharpen our leading edge in the global and domestic markets: our human resources.

Fourth, let us ensure that our workers are healthy and safe—and communicate that to the rest of the world.

Let us not fear criticism for imposing stronger quarantine measures if this is what it will take to prevent further "importation" of SARS from returning nationals or visiting foreigners. Having been a health secretary, I know that we do not need a new law to do what needs to be done. If we need to hide

GOOD, A19

Village bans SARS suspect

From page A1

She said she was compelled to tell the woman to leave because the residents were on the verge of panic and practically benumbing the visitor.

Incensed by the expulsion, the woman's kin have threatened to sue the village leaders.

Paulino said she had apologized for the "unfortunate event" and appealed to the woman's brother to reconsider the decision to sue.

Meanwhile, Ozamiz Vice Mayor Carlos Bernad is seeking a protocol on reporting SARS-related stories.

Bernad said utmost consideration should be accorded the privacy of persons suspected of being SARS carriers.

Dr. Daniel Medina, city health director, said the public should not pass judgment until after the necessary tests had established the true condition of suspected SARS cases.

Nevertheless, Medina described the Tinago residents' behavior as a "healthy sign of vigilance against the disease."

"I just hope these indications of vigilance are translated into actual prevention actions," he said.

The widespread anxiety is resulting in cold cash for pharmacies.

As of Monday, the city's largest drug store was "out of stock" of surgical masks, including items intended only for display.

Leo Tan, proprietor of another pharmacy, said sales had risen by 400 percent since Saturday.

In Alabang, Metro Manila, the granddaughter of the late Mauricio Catalan is preparing to leave her isolation quarters at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

"I have no fever, no cough and respiratory difficulty," Jennifer Catalan, 27, said in an interview with dBBS radio

early yesterday.

She said she was not anxious to be released, but was willing to wait for health officials to declare her completely safe.

Jennifer took care of her grandfather before he died of SARS on April 22. Maunelo was infected by his daughter Adela, who died on April 14.

"They all wear masks and gowns. They look like astronauts in protective suits. But they are good to me," Jennifer said of the RITM doctors attending to her.

RITM director Dr. Remigio Olveda, who was earlier in Tacloban City to check on isolation facilities there, confirmed that Jennifer's condition had improved in the last 36 hours.

He said she had fever on three occasions during her 10-day stay, but was well as of yesterday morning.

He also said Jennifer and her five remaining relatives at the RITM were not showing SARS symptoms and might be discharged on Friday.

Dr. Maria Consorcio Quizon, acting head of the National Epidemiology Center, also said the Catalans would be released Friday, the end of their 14-day quarantine.

She said the Department of Health had allowed the family to hold a wake for Maunelo because they would all be deemed clear of SARS by Friday.

According to Quizon, a total of 12 persons are under quarantine at various hospitals.

She said that so far, 61 persons had been confined for more than 24 hours at the RITM, San Lazaro Hospital and hospitals in Region 1, 2, 6, 7 and Metro Manila.

But they are all negative for SARS, she said.

Quizon also said the DOH was looking into the case of an overseas Filipino worker brought in as a SARS "suspect" from Isabela.

The OFW had come from the Middle

East but stayed in Hong Kong for two weeks.

In Laoag City, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has sought an extended suspension of the flights to and from Hong Kong for the whole month of May.

The suspension is to be lifted on May 3, but reports of the local transmission of SARS prompted Marcos to extend it. His spokesperson Lito Gorrone said the governor would announce the extension at his regular press briefing today.

Air Philippines earlier cancelled its Hong Kong-Laoag flights beginning April 14 in compliance with Marcos' request.

Dr. Rosito Tamayo, quarantine officer at the Laoag International Airport, said Ilocos Norte remained SARS-free despite continued flights from Guangdong in China and Kaohsiung in Taiwan.

Tamayo attributed this to the strict health protocol imposed on all air travelers.

"Our procedure starts by coordinating our efforts [with airport officials] at the entry points of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Guangdong. Passengers will not be allowed to board the plane if they fail to undergo checkup and interview," he said.

The Philippine Information Agency in Laoag has been running a regular radio program in the state-run Radyo ng Bayan to help raise public awareness on SARS.

During the radio program, Tamayo received text messages inquiring about the possibility of infection of employees holding office near the airport.

"That's an unwarranted fear," Tamayo said. "There is no reason to fear the air at the airport. I myself only use my mask when I board a plane."

Noting that false information could spark panic, Tamayo urged residents to keep calm.

"I received a tip about a hotel employee who was supposedly in hiding because

he was sick. It took me all day to track that person [in various hotels]," he said.

The employee turned out to be a staff member of the Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino who recently went to Guangdong for a cooking demonstration.

Tamayo said he advised the employee to observe a 10-day quarantine.

In Manila, Senate President Franklin Drilon said he was not in favor of a "harsher" penalty for people who refuse to be put under quarantine for SARS or other infectious diseases.

"Imposing a heavier penalty, I think, is not called for," he told reporters when asked to comment on a bill filed by Sen. Manuel Villar seeking higher penalties for quarantine violators.

Drilon noted that many of those afflicted with SARS were OFWs, and said what was important was the prevention of the transmission of the SARS virus.

At present, a violator of quarantine regulations is punished with a fine of not more than P2,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.

Laws sufficient

"I believe our quarantine laws, even if they are nearly half a century old, would still be sufficient to address this problem," Drilon said.

Villar has filed a bill seeking to amend Republic Act 123 by granting additional powers to the Bureau of Quarantine.

The bill proposes for quarantine violators a fine of not more than P10,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both. Those who refuse to go on isolation after developing an infectious disease face a fine of not more than P20,000 or a jail term of not more than two years, or both. With reports from Cristina Armandon and Vincent Cabrera, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau; Christine Q. Avendano in Manila

This time, no more 'beso-beso' for GMA

By Carlos Pablo

GMA had her temperature taken, an Army physician joined her on board the chartered Lear jet, a personal anti-killer pneumonia kit formed part of her luggage. And strict instructions were given that she wasn't to be kissed on the cheek.

This is how Presidents travel, in the time of SARS.

President Macapagal Arroyo yesterday

day morning took off from Villamor Airbase for the Asean summit meeting on SARS, and the precautions she took reflected the importance of the fight against the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus.

Director Edgardo Sabitana of the Bureau of Quarantine and International Health Surveillance was the one who applied a thermometer strip to the President's forehead.

With her temperature normal, Ms.

Macapagal proceeded to deliver her departure statement. She said she'll be appealing to other Asean heads of government to ensure not only the health of overseas Filipino workers employed in their countries but also to assure the security of their jobs.

"I shall seek protection within Asean, not only for the health and safety, but for the jobs of Filipinos," the President said.

Dr. Jimmy Colacio, who has the rank of

Army captain, accompanied the chief executive to monitor her health condition.

The President and her delegation was also provided with individual SARS kits consisting of N95 masks and goggles.

At the send-off ceremonies, it was all handshakes for President Macapagal's all-male wellwishers, which included Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, and ranking police and military officials.

Tale of two women: This Samareña is cheered

From page A1

and that she is not really a SARS patient," said Carmen Ables, a resident of Ormoc City, who went to the hospital just to see JP for herself.

Mario Baron, 32, and a tricycle driver, vented his anger on health officials who erroneously declared JP as a SARS case.

"They should be very cautious in issuing statements and in declaring a person as a SARS patient. Look at JP, it created discrimination among her town

mates and the region was also shunned like the plague by other people," he said.

And unlike her arrival at the hospital last Friday, no Special Weapons and Tactics Team members were around to secure her person.

She was escorted out from her room by Department of Health-Eastern Visayas Regional Director Mita Bachobac; Dr. Adelaide Asperin, chief of hospital, and Ligaya Anacota-Acosta, regional information officer.

The officials took off their surgical

masks when they came out. Bacus told the Inquirer that taking off their masks was their way of saying that indeed JP was not a SARS case.

When asked by the reporters how she felt, JP said she was happy and thanked God that she was not ill with SARS after all.

"I thank God. He's been good to me," JP said.

She also expressed her gratitude to all DOH local officials, including the doctor and nurses that attended to her during her stay in the hospital, as well

as City Mayor Alfredo Romualdez for allowing her to stay at the hospital.

Romualdez had earlier opposed JP's confinement.

Bacus said JP would be asked not to go outside her house in Maybucong. "We advised her not to go out... just to make sure," Bacus said.

According to Bacus, JP has to stay indoors for about 12 days. All the medical staff that attended JP during her stay at EYRMC would also be asked to go on self-quarantine for the same period, Asperin added.

Roxas admits N95 masks out of stock

From page A1

in size.

Emergency meeting

In an emergency meeting with drug manufacturers, dealers and distributors yesterday, Roxas said that 3M Philippines assured the government that it was working hard to ensure that the country retain its allocation from 3M.

Based on his discussions with the country's drug store chains, including Mercury Drug, Roxas reported that all drug stores have run out of the N95 masks because they were not ready for the sudden surge in demand.

Celia Carlo, who represents the Drug Store Association of the Philippines, said that their members normally have only

two or three pieces of surgical masks in stock because nobody had any use for them in the past except hospital workers. Carlo said that most Filipinos would prioritize food in their purchases because only those with extra money can afford to buy the masks for protection.

Even San Miguel Corp., which announced its plan to distribute N95 masks to its employees for use in their offices and plants, has been having trouble getting suppliers. A top drug store chain, according to a source, is negotiating with a Taiwanese supplier for the shipment of 10,000 boxes.

Not priced at P470

Roxas also denied reports that the price of 3M N95 masks has shot up to P470 each. He said 3M has maintained

the N95 masks' price at P70 each although this could only be bought in boxes of 20 pieces. He urged consumers to report traders or stores that were peddling the masks in single packs and at prohibitive rates.

Roxas was ordered by the President Saturday to look into the scarcity of N95 masks in drugstores and their skyrocketing prices allegedly due to hoarding and price manipulation.

Roxas also urged consumers to heed the opinion by the Department of Health, World Health Organization and the US Center Disease Control that the N95 masks were only essential for health workers that were dealing SARS cases.

Despite the shortage in masks, Roxas assured the public that the price and

supply of anti-SARS products such as vitamin supplements, rubbing alcohol and hand sanitizing products have been maintained.

Fat margins

Edwin Isaac of Filipino Drug Association revealed that vitamin makers have maintained their prices despite the increase in raw materials of between 100 percent and 400 percent in the last few weeks. Isaac said that vitamin prices would remain steady even if raw material costs would increase by another 400 percent.

Roxas, who has lambasted the multinational drug companies for selling their products at exorbitant prices, refused to comment on Isaac's revelation of the drugmakers' fat margins.

When laundering money is good

From page A1

"There is no guarantee as yet [that the SARS virus won't be passed on from one person to another through money].

We have to wait for the finding that will be conclusive," Medina said in a briefing late last week at the office of Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

Citing a parallel phenomenon, Medina noted the experience in Hong Kong wherein a number were infected by touching contaminated elevator buttons.

"One can never tell because of the nature of money. It circulates widely and there is no way of knowing from whom the money passed," he said.

Airport general manager Edgardo Manda was the first to express concern over the possibility of SARS entering the Philippines through the currency brought in by travelers from SARS-infected countries.

SOS International also tried to rein in the SARS paranoia by saying that wearing masks in public places was not necessary. (See related story on Page A10.)

"To be infected with SARS, one must have prolonged and close contact with a person already symptomatic of SARS. Casual contact, as in the malls, won't do any harm, so wearing masks in public has no appreciative effect," Medina said.

He advised constant hand washing or use of alcohol-based disinfectants.

"Don't mind that washing your hands every so often is a sign of obsessive compulsive behavior," he said. "Bring along alcohol, [even that] in gel form. It will be effective in killing the virus."

The London-based SOS International is a group of medical experts that attend to health concerns in about 25 countries. It employs 3,000 medical professionals worldwide.

Filipinos should take refresher

lessons in cleanliness, according to two leading pulmonologists.

"We are too preoccupied with masks. Let us not forget that the hand is one of the most potent means of transmitting a disease," said Dr. Alipio Abad of the Makati Medical Center.

Abad has issued a memo ordering MMC personnel to wash their hands upon entering and leaving the hospital as part of the measures against SARS.

"The washing of hands is as important as wearing masks," Abad said during a weekly forum sponsored by the Philippine College of Physicians and the Mirror Magazine.

Although people are riding on the craze in masks, especially the recommended N95, Abad said, the SARS virus could just as effectively be transmitted by hand to the mucous membrane in the eyes.

This is the reason doctors assigned to

contagious diseases should wear goggles, he said.

Besides, Abad said, a mask was not only expensive but also useless when reused.

"If you reuse it, the possibility of inhaling a virus is high," he warned.

Dr. Ma. Encarnita Blanco-Lampin of the Philippine Heart Center said that if there was something good coming out of the SARS outbreak, it was the fact that people were becoming conscious of cleanliness.

"In a way this is good," she said at the same forum. "We are opening our eyes to this sickness... that can be transmitted by cough or sneeze."

Lampin noted that in the pre-SARS days, Filipinos were known to spit anywhere or to sneeze or cough without covering their mouths.

This was how tuberculosis was spread, she said.

Now that...

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graphically isolated or insulated from the rest of the world is archaic at the least. The interdependence of economies must become the basis for the new public health order. Where people, ideas, products and services cross borders at lightning speed, so will microbes.

Hence, we should have proceeded from the assumption that the arrival of SARS was inevitable. We needn't have waited for its actual landing. We could have, we still can, prepare our people for the possibility of more difficult times ahead. Our leaders must have the courage to bring people to a point where individual short-term sacrifices must be made for long-term social and economic benefits. SARS now, perhaps some other virus later. It makes no difference.

Our own experience shows that nations don't need to be infected to be affected. Even before the first SARS death in the Philippines, airlines were already reporting sharp drops in the number of their passengers, companies were canceling trips to Manila and investors were scaling down their expectations of economies and businesses everywhere.

But let's not assume that the economic impact of SARS is defined by physical territory alone. We are a nation dispersed throughout every nook and cranny of the planet. And regardless of where Filipinos are, it is incumbent upon the State to use its sovereign powers to the extent that it can to protect its people, wherever they are. Filipinos are not just people who live in the Philippines.

Inevitably, our economic losses will be related to how job markets for Filipinos here and abroad may—if we don't act now—shrink even more.

Beatable disease

Second, we should stress that SARS can be beaten. Despite what doomsayers peddle, the human race will survive this disease in the same way that it has survived many other diseases in recent history.

The World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control in the United States have isolated the virus and mapped its genome in fantastically record time. Even as we wait for an antidote, people by their natural immune systems are beating the virus every single day. More than 95 percent of people found with SARS will survive the disease. Just as important, we also know that the SARS virus can be avoided.

As with HIV/AIDS, both the stigma and the risk associated with SARS can be erased by simple, reasonable adjustments in behavior and lifestyle. Fidelity to a single partner, safe sex, the avoiding of drugs and the screening of blood for transfusion can guarantee people of safety from HIV/AIDS.

Because it is spread by a virus similar to and likely mutated from the organism that brings the common cold, our weapons against SARS are even simpler: Keep your resistance up by eating properly, exercising regularly and getting plenty of rest. Wash your hands. Dispose of garbage properly, attend to your personal hygiene and keep the environment clean.

In the same breath, I must add that it is simplistic to imply that major public health problems like HIV/AIDS or SARS can be solved by changing people's behavior alone. In any disease outbreak, the importance of reformed, responsive and high-quality health care systems cannot be understated. The presence of a diagnostic kit, a cure or even a vaccine for HIV/AIDS or SARS will not ensure that these tools for fighting disease will be readily available to those who need them most.

Timely information

Third, we must provide people with timely and relevant information about the disease, especially at this time in the natural course of the disease when the paralysis brought about by SARS is caused by great uncertainty that results in fear and in some instances even panic.

Further study, I believe, will bear this out: People are afraid of SARS not so much because it can cause death. They are afraid because of the realization that SARS infections immediately and directly translates to micro-economic problems: loss of jobs and loss of economic opportunities.

Given the choice, our people will put their economic interests above personal safety. This is a matter of survival. Our government should do no less, because it is also a matter of survival for our leaders. As the experience of China and Hong Kong shows, the political leadership, not just the health sector, is being put to the test.

The fear of economic loss, defined as the inability to work, the loss of freedom and autonomy to earn enough to support one's self and one's family, is perhaps the single most compelling force that will spell the difference between SARS as a national calamity that could cripple the economy or SARS as a national opportunity to sharpen our leading edge in the global and domestic markets: our human resources.

Fourth, let us ensure that our workers are healthy and safe—and communicate this to the rest of the world.

Let us not fear criticism for imposing stronger quarantine measures if this is what it will take to prevent further "importation" of SARS from returning nationals or visiting foreigners. Having been a health secretary, I know that we do not need a new law to do what needs to be done. If we need to hide

GOOD/ A15

Village bans SARS suspect

From page A1

She said she was compelled to tell the woman to leave because the residents were on the verge of panic and practically besieging the visitor.

Incensed by the expulsion, the woman's kin have threatened to sue the village leaders.

Paulino said she had apologized for the "unfortunate event" and appealed to the woman's brother to reconsider the decision to sue.

Meanwhile, Ozamiz Vice Mayor Carlos Bernad is seeking a protocol on reporting SARS-related stories.

Bernad said utmost consideration should be accorded the privacy of persons suspected of being SARS carriers.

Dr. Daniel Medina, city health director, said the public should not pass judgment until after the necessary tests had established the true condition of suspected SARS cases.

Nevertheless, Medina described the Tinago residents' behavior as a "healthy sign of vigilance against the disease."

"I just hope these indications of vigilance are translated into actual prevention actions," he said.

The widespread anxiety is resulting in cold cash for pharmacies.

As of Monday, the city's largest drug store was "out of stock" of surgical masks, including items intended only for display.

Leo Tan, proprietor of another pharmacy, said sales had risen by 400 percent since Saturday.

In Alabang, Metro Manila, the granddaughter of the late Mauricio Catalan is preparing to leave her isolation quarters at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM).

"I have no fever, no cough and respiratory difficulty," Jennifer Catalan, 27, said in an interview with dBBS radio

early yesterday.

She said she was not anxious to be released, but was willing to wait for health officials to declare her completely safe.

Jennifer took care of her grandfather before he died of SARS on April 22. Mauricio was infected by his daughter Adela, who died on April 14.

"They all wear masks and gowns. They look like astronauts in protective suits. But they are good to me," Jennifer said of the RITM doctors attending to her.

RITM director Dr. Remigio Olveda, who was earlier in Tacloban City to check on isolation facilities there, confirmed that Jennifer's condition had improved in the last 36 hours.

He said she had fever on three occasions during her 10-day stay, but was well as of yesterday morning.

He also said Jennifer and her five remaining relatives at the RITM were not showing SARS symptoms and might be discharged on Friday.

Dr. Maria Consorcio Quizon, acting head of the National Epidemiology Center, also said the Catalans would be released Friday, the end of their 14-day quarantine.

She said the Department of Health had allowed the family to hold a wake for Mauricio because they would all be deemed clear of SARS by Friday.

According to Quizon, a total of 12 persons are under quarantine at various hospitals.

She said that so far, 61 persons had been confined for more than 24 hours at the RITM, San Lazaro Hospital and hospitals in Region 1, 2, 6, 7 and Metro Manila.

But they are all negative for SARS, she said.

Quizon also said the DOH was looking into the case of an overseas Filipino worker brought in as a SARS "suspect" from Isabe.

The OFW had come from the Middle

East but stayed in Hong Kong for two weeks.

In Laoag City, Ilocos Norte Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has sought an extended suspension of the flights to and from Hong Kong for the whole month of May.

The suspension is to be lifted on May 3, but reports of the local transmission of SARS prompted Marcos to extend it. His spokesperson Lito Gorospe said the governor would announce the extension at his regular press briefing today.

Air Philippines earlier cancelled its Hong Kong-Laoag flights beginning April 14 in compliance with Marcos' request.

Dr. Rosito Tamayo, quarantine officer at the Laoag International Airport, said Ilocos Norte remained SARS-free despite continued flights from Guangdong in China and Keelung in Taiwan.

Tamayo attributed this to the strict health protocol imposed on all air travelers.

"Our procedure starts by coordinating our efforts [with airport officials] at the entry points of Taiwan, Hong Kong and Guangdong. Passengers will not be allowed to board the plane if they fail to undergo checkup and interview," he said.

The Philippine Information Agency in Laoag has been running a regular radio program in the state-run Radyo ng Bayan to help raise public awareness on SARS.

During the radio program, Tamayo received text messages inquiring about the possibility of infection of employees holding office near the airport.

"That's an unwarranted fear," Tamayo said. "There is no reason to fear the air at the airport. I myself only use my mask when I board a plane."

Noting that false information could spark panic, Tamayo urged residents to keep calm.

"I received a tip about a hotel employee who was supposedly in hiding because

he was sick. It took me all day to track this person [in various hotels]," he said.

The employee turned out to be a staff member of the Fort Ilocandia Resort and Casino who recently went to Guangdong for a cooking demonstration.

Tamayo said he advised the employee to observe a 10-day quarantine.

In Manila, Senate President Franklin Drilon said he was not in favor of a "harsher" penalty for people who refuse to be put under quarantine for SARS or other infectious diseases.

"Imposing a heavier penalty, I think, is not called for," he told reporters when asked to comment on a bill filed by Sen. Manuel Villar seeking higher penalties for quarantine violators.

Drilon noted that many of those afflicted with SARS were OFWs, and said what was important was the prevention of the transmission of the SARS virus.

At present, a violator of quarantine regulations is punished with a fine of not more than P2,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both.

Laws sufficient

"I believe our quarantine laws, even if they are nearly half a century old, would still be sufficient to address this problem," Drilon said.

Villar has filed a bill seeking to amend Republic Act 123 by granting additional powers to the Bureau of Quarantine.

The bill proposes for quarantine violators a fine of not more than P10,000 or imprisonment of not more than one year, or both. Those who refuse to go on isolation after developing an infectious disease face a fine of not more than P20,000 or a jail term of not more than two years, or both. With reports from Cristina Arzadon and Vincent Cabrera, PH Northern Luzon Bureau; Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

This time, no more 'beso-beso' for GMA

By Carito Pablo

SHE had her temperature taken, an Army physician joined her on board the chartered Lear jet, a personal anti-killer pneumonia kit formed part of her luggage. And strict instructions were given that she wasn't to be kissed on the cheek.

This is how Presidents travel, in the time of SARS.

President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday

day morning took off from Villamor Airbase for the Asean summit meeting on SARS, and the precautions she took reflected the importance of the fight against the dreaded Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus.

Director Edgardo Sabitsana of the Bureau of Quarantine and International Health Surveillance was the one who applied a thermometer strap to the President's forehead.

With her temperature normal, Ms.

Macapagal proceeded to deliver her departure statement. She said she'll be appealing to other Asean heads of government to ensure not only the health of overseas Filipino workers employed in their countries but also to assure the security of their jobs.

"I shall seek protection within Asean, not only for the health and safety, but for the jobs, of Filipinos," the President said.

Dr. Jimmy Colacio, who has the rank of

Army captain, accompanied the chief executive to monitor her health condition.

The President and her delegation was also provided with individual SARS kits consisting of N95 masks and goggles.

At the send-off ceremonies, it was all handshakes for President Macapagal's all-male well-wishers, which included Vice President Teofisto Guingona, Executive Secretary Alberto Romulo, and ranking police and military officials.

Tale of two women: This Samareña is cheered

From page A1

and that she is not really a SARS patient," said Carmen Abien, a resident of Ormoc City, who went to the hospital just to see JP for herself.

Mario Baron, 32, and a tricycle driver, vented his anger on health officials who erroneously declared JP as a SARS case.

"They should be very cautious in issuing statements and in declaring a person as a SARS patient. Look at JP, it created discrimination among her town

mates and the region was also shunned like the plague by other people," he said.

And unlike her arrival at the hospital last Friday, no Special Weapons and Tactics Team members were around to secure her person.

She was escorted out from her room by Department of Health-Eastern Visayas Regional Director Mila Bachobacus, Dr. Adelaida Asperin, chief of hospital, and Ligaya Anacta-Acosta, regional information officer.

The officials took off their surgical

masks when they came out. Bacus told the INQUIRER that taking off their masks was their way of saying that indeed JP was not a SARS case.

When asked by the reporters how she felt, JP said she was happy and thanked God that she was not ill with SARS after all.

"I thank God. He's been good to me," JP said.

She also expressed her gratitude to all DOH local officials, including the doctor and nurses that attended to her during her stay in the hospital, as well

as City Mayor Alfredo Romualdez for allowing her to stay at the hospital.

Romualdez had earlier opposed JP's confinement.

Bacus said JP would be asked not to go outside her house in Maybucong. "We advised her not to go out... just to make sure," Bacus said.

According to Bacus, JP has to stay in doors for about 12 days. All the medical staff that attended JP during her stay at EVRMC would also be asked to go on self-quarantine for the same period. Asperin added.

Roxas admits N95 masks out of stock

From page A1

in size

Emergency meeting

In an emergency meeting with drug manufacturers, dealers and distributors yesterday, Roxas said that 3M Philippines assured the government that it was working hard to ensure that the country retain its allocation from 3M.

Based on his discussions with the country's drug store chains, including Mercury Drug, Roxas reported that all drug stores have run out of the N95 masks because they were not ready for the sudden surge in demand.

Celia Carlo, who represents the Drug Store Association of the Philippines, said that their members normally have only

two or three pieces of surgical masks in stock because nobody had any use for them in the past except hospital workers. Carlo said that most Filipinos would prioritize food in their purchases because only those with extra money can afford to buy the masks for protection.

Even San Miguel Corp., which announced its plan to distribute N95 masks to its employees for use in their offices and plants, has been having trouble getting suppliers. A top drug-store chain, according to a source, is negotiating with a Taiwanese supplier for the shipment of 10,000 boxes.

Not priced at P470

Roxas also denied reports that the price of 3M N95 masks has shot up to P470 each. He said 3M has maintained

the N95 masks' price at P70 each although this could only be bought in boxes of 20 pieces. He urged consumers to report traders or stores that were peddling the masks in single packs and at prohibitive rates.

Roxas was ordered by the President Saturday to look into the scarcity of N95 masks in drugstores and their skyrocketing prices allegedly due to hoarding and price manipulation.

Roxas also urged consumers to heed the opinion by the Department of Health, World Health Organization and the US Center for Disease Control that the N95 masks were only essential for health workers that were dealing SARS cases.

Despite the shortage in masks, Roxas assured the public that the supply and

supply of anti-SARS products such as vitamin supplements, rubbing alcohol and hand sanitizing products have been maintained.

Fat margins

Edwin Isaac of Filipino Drug Association revealed that vitamin makers have maintained their prices despite the increase in raw materials of between 100 percent and 400 percent in the last few weeks. Isaac said that vitamin prices would remain steady even if raw material costs would increase by another 400 percent.

Roxas, who has lambasted the multinational drug companies for selling their products at exorbitant prices, refused to comment on Isaac's revelation of the drugmakers' fat margins.

When laundering money is good

From page A1

"There is no guarantee as yet [that the SARS virus won't be passed on from one person to another through money].

We have to wait for the finding that will be conclusive," Medina said in a briefing late last week at the office of Vice President Teofisto Guingona.

Citing a parallel phenomenon, Medina noted the experience in Hong Kong wherein a number were infected by touching contaminated elevator buttons.

"One can never tell because of the nature of money. It circulates widely and there is no way of knowing from whom the money passed," he said.

Airport general manager Edgardo Manda was the first to express concern over the possibility of SARS entering the Philippines through the currency brought in by travelers from SARS-infected countries.

SOS International, I also tried to rein in the SARS paranoia by saying that wearing masks in public places was not necessary. (See related story on Page A18.)

"To be infected with SARS, one must have prolonged and close contact with a person already symptomatic of SARS. Casual contact, as in the malls, won't do any harm, so wearing masks in public has no appreciative effect," Medina said.

He advised constant hand washing or use of alcohol-based disinfectants.

"Don't mind that washing your hands every so often is a sign of obsessive compulsive behavior," he said. "Bring along alcohol, [even that] in gel form. It will be effective in killing the virus."

The London-based SOS International is a group of medical experts that attend to health concerns in about 25 countries. It employs 3,000 medical professionals worldwide.

Filipinos should take refresher

lessons in cleanliness, according to two leading pulmonologists.

"We are too preoccupied with masks. Let us not forget that the hand is one of the most potent means of transmitting a disease," said Dr. Alipio Abad of the Makati Medical Center.

Abad has issued a memo ordering MMC personnel to wash their hands upon entering and leaving the hospital as part of the measures against SARS.

"The washing of hands is as important as wearing masks," Abad said during a weekly forum sponsored by the Philippine College of Physicians and the Mirror Magazine.

Although people are riding on the craze in masks, especially the recommended N95, Abad said, the SARS virus could just as effectively be transmitted by hand to the mucus membrane in the eyes.

This is the reason doctors assigned to

contagious diseases should wear goggles, he said.

Besides, Abad said, a mask was not only expensive but also useless when reused.

"If you reuse it, the possibility of inhaling a virus is high," he warned.

Dr. Ma Encarnita Blanco-Lumpin of the Philippine Heart Center said that if there was something good coming out of the SARS outbreak, it was the fact that people were becoming conscious of cleanliness.

"In a way this is good," she said at the same forum. "We are opening our eyes to this sickness... that can be transmitted by cough or sneeze."

Lumpin noted that in the pre-SARS days, Filipinos were known to spit anywhere or to sneeze or cough without covering their mouths.

This was how tuberculosis was spread, she said.

World overreacting to SARS, say AIDS experts

WASHINGTON—People around the world are overreacting to SARS, creating a sense of panic that could overwhelm common-sense measures for containing the virus, top AIDS experts said on Monday.

And sensational media coverage of SARS has fanned the flames, said David Baltimore, who won the 1975 Nobel Prize in medicine for his work on how viruses cause disease.

"I think there has been overreaction," said Baltimore, a leading AIDS researcher who is now president of the California Institute of Technology.

"I have to agree with that," added Dr. David Ho, another top AIDS expert who heads the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center in New York. "Obviously, the fear comes from the fact that this is a novel disease. Many aspects of this epidemic are still mysterious. Fear of SARS is out-running SARS per se."

Ho and Baltimore ought to know. AIDS kills virtually everyone it infects without treatment and 20 years into the AIDS epidemic there is no cure and no vaccine.

In contrast, 94 percent of SARS patients recover.

Baltimore said boycotts of Chinese-owned businesses and scenes of people walking the streets of Hong Kong wearing surgical masks show that the general public does not understand the real dangers.

"People clearly have reacted to it with a level of fear that is incommensurate with the size of the problem and I think it is getting in the way of a reasonable response."

While SARS is new and frightening, its impact, so far, has been minor. In a mild year, influenza and its complications kill an estimated 250,000 people around the world. Malaria kills at least a million, mostly children.

Yet earlier this month two Chinese runners were asked to pull out of a marathon in the Netherlands because of SARS fears. Many cities have reported people are avoiding Chinatown districts—including New York, where no SARS case has been confirmed. Reuters

Chinese villagers riot over quarantine plan

BEIJING—Around 2,000 villagers of Chagugang town torched an abandoned school building earmarked as a SARS quarantine center, ransacked government offices and overturned cars in China's first reported instance of social unrest related to SARS, officials said yesterday.

The mayhem in Chagugang, a rural area close to the heavily populated port city of Tianjin, happened on Sunday night after the Tianjin government decided to convert a school into an isolation facility for urban people suspected of having contact with SARS patients.

Chagugang, a township of 32,500 people, is about 70 km southeast of Beijing. It has so far reported 43 SARS cases, including two deaths. It has also acknowledged 67 suspected cases.

"The plan was to transform the high school into an isolation center," a Chagugang official, who did not want to be named, told AFP. "When nearby villagers heard this, they feared they would (catch) the disease. The head of the village explained to the people but they wouldn't listen."

He said about 2,000 angry residents marched to the school and ransacked it, smashing windows before setting it on fire.

"Then they went to the local education office and smashed it ... Then they went to the town government office and smashed the whole building, breaking windows, removing doors and throwing them out of windows. They broke in and smashed everything, they overturned vehicles. All facilities are out of use now," the official said.

The official said armed police and anti-riot forces arrived but by that time the villagers had run away. Residents yesterday said between 10 and 20 people had been arrested.

The official estimated the crowd was 2,000-strong but only a core of 30 to 40 people took part in the destruction.

"The rest cheered them on," he said.

Residents showed no remorse yesterday, voicing outrage that the government claimed to be trying to stop SARS spreading to the countryside but at the same time it wanted to send urban suspect cases to their township.

A former teacher, now a village education official, suggested there was more to the matter than just SARS.

"The issue wasn't just a question of SARS. Other issues were involved, like corruption," he said.

The director of the Tianjin foreign affairs office, in a fax to AFP confirmed the incident but said everything was now calm.

"Because of some people's complaints the government of the district announced the cancellation of this observation station on (Sunday) at 4 p.m.," said Chen Wenming. "But at 6 p.m., stirred by some people, several dozens of villagers who didn't know the truth smashed ... the school building and the windows and doors of the township government."

Beijing hospitals treating more than 1,000 patients with SARS are running short of drugs and surgical masks. Doctors and nurses are overworked and demoralized at the expanding number of hospitals assigned to handle SARS, Beijing Health Bureau deputy director Deng Xiaohong was quoted by the Beijing Times as saying.

To ease the burden, China's military is sending 1,200 doctors and nurses to Beijing. And the city government says it is adding nine hospitals to the six already designated to handle SARS. Yesterday it started using ambulances to move hundreds of non-SARS cases to other institutions.

AFP, Reuters, AP

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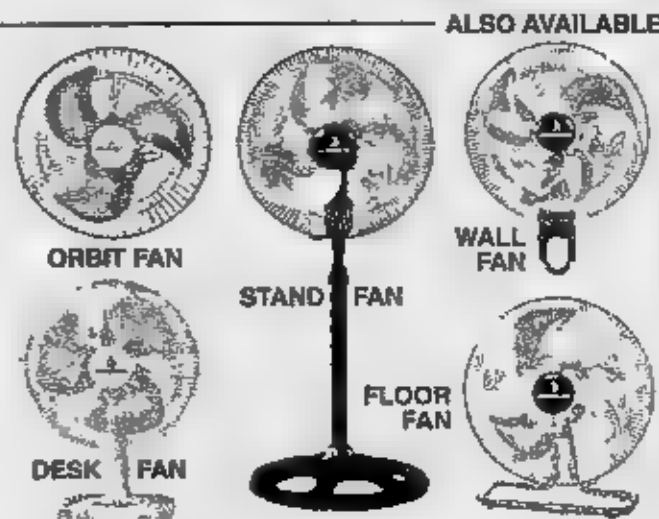
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HOME APPLIANCES

Now that we've ...

From page A11

behind more laws, and use up precious time that should be spent acting, we are truly headed for economic decline.

What we must do now is what all other nations must consider doing in a globalized economy. The whole world should work toward universal pre-departure quarantine standards of perhaps about 10 days, to cover the incubation period of the disease. An alternative: a five-day quarantine at point of exit and a five-day quarantine at point of entry.

Mandatory quarantine

In the absence of universal pre-departure quarantines, what the Philippines can do to protect those who are arriving from overseas work and their families who await them is to develop a 10-day mandatory arrival quarantine, with good facilities, trained infection control teams and the highest affordable standards we can achieve.

The worst thing that could happen to us would be stigma and marginalization of our OFWs in their community and within their families.

On the other hand, it is in our best interest to impose a pre-departure quarantine of the highest possible standards as well. Libya has banned the entry of workers from SARS-infected areas; other countries will follow.

We need not wait for any international agreements. We should pilot this; the Philippines has an opportunity to be the first country in the world to enforce a strict pre-departure quarantine for overseas workers. We need to send a signal to the world that our workers are healthy.

Fifth, let us mobilize all sectors of society to enlighten, inform and enable individuals to have healthier lifestyles.

To address local transmission, let us work together for an effective information campaign. Perhaps the major networks can sponsor a 24-hour telethon and invite scientists, political leaders, celebrities and ordinary people to deliver key messages on im-

proving personal hygiene, ensuring environmental sanitation and creating from this crisis a cleaner, healthier Philippines.

Let us jointly come up with clear standards for personal hygiene with other sectors. We should communicate this in such a way that the ordinary person on the street can understand. Who should use masks? How often should we wash our hands? What is the definition of a fever? We should saturate all possible settings with information: schools, public places, health centers, public transport, churches, workplaces.

Sixth, let us use this opportunity to strengthen public health in our country.

Let us not shrink from the responsibility of caring for those who are sick, whether they are at home or in the hospital. Let us prepare our hospitals by training our health workers and providing what is needed to establish good infection control.

Let us use the SARS epidemic as a means of implementing reforms in the financing of health services. Let us bring the standards of local public health systems up and perhaps strive to protect entire islands as tourist destinations.

Let us put our best minds together to bear SARS, and save the demand for our workers here and abroad.

Over the years, I have come to one and only one conclusion in motivating people to choose healthier behaviors. The compelling force for change must be larger than health.

Health itself is often only a means toward something else that is of value to society.

In today's context, we must be united in our desire to save whatever economic opportunities we have and perhaps expand these if we can. This should be the reason for everything that we must do in relation to SARS.

We must achieve health as a means to a stronger economy. Good health is good economics.

The author was the Secretary of Health from 1992 to 1995.

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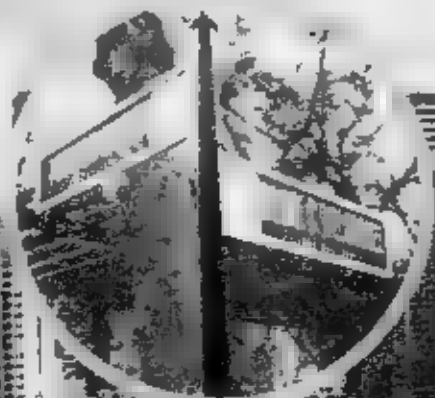
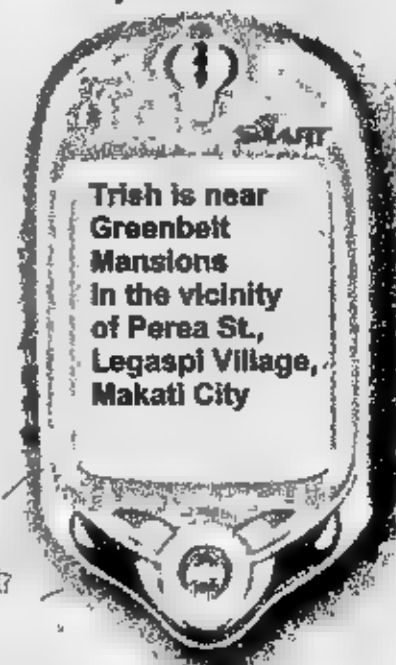
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Asean plus China agree on SARS battle plan

From page A1

the chief executive of Hong Kong, which has reported 150 deaths.

More than half of Asean members have reported SARS deaths: Singapore, 22; Vietnam, five; Malaysia, two; Philippines, two; Thailand, two; and Indonesia, one.

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and China hope to dispel widespread fear of SARS and convince a spooked world that they are undertaking efficient measures to contain the spread of the deadly disease. The SARS crisis has cost the region's economy and tourism sectors dearly.

"It's the lack of information that causes fear of SARS... which is more destructive than SARS itself. That's the consensus," said President Macapagal who briefed Filipino reporters on the mechanics of the regional information network, the setting up of a SARS health emergency fund, and 18 other measures agreed upon at the Asean summit.

Ms Macapagal said Dr. David Heymann, World Health Organization's chief of communicable diseases, stressed to her and other Southeast Asian leaders, the importance of sharing information, best practices and new findings among Asean members—Brunei, Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

"Even if there is no known cure, there's a way of preventing it (SARS) from spreading," she said. "That's the important thing."

China and Thailand pledged initial seed money of \$1.2 million and \$250,000 for an Asian fund to study and devise preventive measures against SARS. But Ms Macapagal said the bulk of the money for the fund would be sourced from a \$1-billion grant given to the Asean Foundation for AIDS.

"This summit, Asean plus China, will create confidence in the world community that this region has responded to the problem, and that the situation will be put under control by close collaboration," Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra told reporters.

A draft Asean-China joint statement prepared by the Chinese proposed a meeting between regional immigration officials "to coordinate entry and exit policies and measures in response to SARS control and treatment."

The draft also proposed cooperative research and the holding of a high-level international symposium on SARS in China next month.

"We note that SARS has already had a serious

adverse impact on the economic development, social functioning, and international exchanges and cooperation in our countries and this region," the draft said. "SARS represents a formidable threat and challenge to the economic and social development of this region."

The WHO said the incidence of SARS had peaked in many places, but it voiced fears the situation was worsening in China where nine new deaths and 200 more infections were also announced on Tuesday. Nearly 10,000 people who might have been exposed to the virus have been put under home quarantine in China—including 7,600 in Beijing.

Hong Kong yesterday said it had another 12 fatalities. Three more nations—Mongolia, South Korea and New Zealand—joined the list of nations with SARS infections.

The new SARS deaths brought the worldwide toll to at least 354. There have been more than 5,300 infections reported in over 30 countries.

Draft declaration

According to the draft Asean declaration that is expected to be issued late Tuesday night, the Southeast Asian leaders pledged to keep their borders and economies open despite the crisis.

The draft declaration said the leaders recognized "the need for members to take individual and collective responsibility to implement stringent measures to control and contain the spread of SARS."

The Asean SARS Containment Information Network was recommended by Singapore, the country in Southeast Asia worst hit by SARS. The city-state has suffered 23 SARS deaths.

In a discussion paper distributed at the summit, Singapore said: "Through this network, Asean member countries could share essential information as well as best practices distilled from their experience in dealing with SARS."

Other measures that were to be adopted by the summit include:

- Ensure proper pre-departure health screening for travelers at the point of origin.
- Establish standardized measures for proper health screening.
- Cooperate in providing public information and education to promote awareness.
- Strengthen cooperation among front-line enforcement agencies.
- Establish and strengthen early warning system on emerging infectious diseases. With reports by AP and AFP

QUALIFIERS FOR PHYSICS TEACHING SCHOLARSHIPS NAMED

Dr. Ester B. Ogena, Director of the Science Education Institute of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-SEI), announces the names of the qualifiers for the Physics Teaching Scholarships.

Of the 16,416 examinees who belonged to the upper 5% of their graduating classes and took the DOST-SEI Undergraduate Scholarship Examination on January 19, 2003, sixty (60) qualified for the Physics Teaching Scholarships.

Each qualifier will be notified about the scholarship award. The awardees will enroll at the Philippine Normal University (PNU), Taft Ave., Manila, and are requested to report together with mother or father at PNU for the signing of the Scholarship Agreement. They should bring the following requirements: Original and Photocopy of Birth Certificate, Original Certificate of Good Moral Character, Original Form 138/Report Card, 4 pcs 1x1 Colored ID Picture, accompanying parent's 2003 Residence Certificate and notarization fee of P50.00.

Scholarship privileges include tuition fees per semester, monthly stipend of P3,450.00, book allowance of P1,500.00 per semester, allowance for PE and Military Science Uniform during the first year only, provision for a round trip transportation expense per year and group accident insurance. Below are the names of the Physics Teaching qualifiers at the Philippine Normal University:

Physics Teaching

Esguerra, Maclina Thearea A.
Cabral, Renel B.
Del Rey, Ammie Grace P.
Dimaya, Danica Angeline P.
Delos Reyes, Lea Ann B.
Canosa, Jonnell C.
Cisneros, Ma. Rosanna E.
Artuza, John Mark V.
Magdalena, Marion G.
Labra, Jay Ann M.
Legarto, Madel C.
Tamisen, Joie Alfred T.
Ompoc, Jose Roman
Pasagul, Eden Troy N.
Galino, Jeffrey R.
Torres, Karole Joseph M.
Francisco, Carlos II E.
Tundag, Nathaniel G.
Gutierrez, Angela C.
Torio, Von Anthony B.
Romano, Luther F.
Saniel, Suzanne C.
Jubilan, Mark Timothy W.
Beltran, Jay N.
Acuña, Irene C.
Hawang, Arvin A.
Gelloagan, April Rose M.
Tomito, Mary Grace A.
Marbas, Ivan Art F.
Muñez, Paterno Jr. A.

Physics and Technology Teaching

Banqued, Ma. Gay Ofalene G.
Lerit, Argin C.
Magdayao, Rensy L.
Erazo, Joel II P.
Montecillo, Andrew D.
Victoria, Marvin S.
Pimentel, Christopher D.
Morales, Juliney Ann L.
Valmores, Jan Darryl M.
Trio, Patrick Janseen B.
Foja, John Edward F.
Laloz, Arby Roxane S.
Alavazo, Jonalyn C.
Bacaling, Maricel D.
Babatuan, Leslie Joie E.
Mempin, Charizza Dominique C.
Miguel, Manuel G.
Tarucan, Rohya C.
Del Rosario, Joseph Carl G.
Rivera, Ross Ann B.
Del Rosario, Roxane Eliza B.
Salonga, Robert Jeremy M.
Viernes, Jestoni T.
Tampos, Caesar Nigutte R.
Villamin, Maria Emma C.
Lundawan, Brent S.
Buot, Kathleen Joy N.
Talaban, Daryl D.J.
Marmol, Enck John H.
Amante, Ma. Virgie L.

2 broadcasters ambushed...

From page A1

the attack.

John Villanueva Jr., known in Albay as Mr. Public Service, was shot dead Monday night in Camalig town while he was about 200 meters from his home.

Villanueva, 54, popularly known as Jun V of Legazpi City's dzGB-AM, was shot several times in Barangay Tagaytay by two still unidentified suspects as he was on his way home on a motorcycle from his radio program "Banguerahan."

The broadcaster, also known as "punakam-abat sa GB" (the kindest dzGB broadcaster), was taken to the Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital. After an hour, attending doctors declared him dead.

The military had once invited him for questioning on suspicion that he was a supporter of the New People's Army. He ignored the invitation.

In Davao City, Jun Porras Pala was riding a taxi on his way home, along with his three bodyguards, when a group of still unidentified men fired on them yesterday morning on the Vincent Hides, Manay Road in Buhangin District.

It was the second attempt on the life of Pala, who became famous for his staunch anti-communist campaign on dxOW in the 1980s.

He was first ambushed in 2001.

Pala, 48, host of a daily program over Manila Broadcasting Co.'s dxGO, was hit in the buttocks and was immediately taken to the hospital. Physicians remove a 9 mm slug from his buttock.

Vigilante group

He founded the anti-communist vigilante group Contra Force and served as Davao City councilor for two consecutive terms. In 2001, he ran but lost in the vice mayoralty race against the group of his former ally, Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

In an interview over dxGO, Pala said his attackers sprayed the taxi with bullets.

He said he and his bodyguards were on their usual "taxi ride" at around 9:30 a.m. when a black van suddenly blocked their path. Shortly after, he said, the armed men on board the van fired on them.

Pala said he and his three bodyguards managed to draw their guns and returned fire, forcing the suspects to drive away.

"I know we hit some of them," he said.

He suspected that some police officers were behind the attempt to kill him. He did not elaborate.

About 39 journalists have been murdered in the Philippines since democracy was restored in 1986, making the country one of the most perilous in the world for members of the media, the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) said earlier this month in its annual report.

No one has been convicted for any of the murders.

In Camalig, Albay, Villanueva, a former vice mayor of the town, suffered 11 gunshot wounds that severely damaged some of his internal organs, including his liver, according to Dr. Tirso de las Reyes who conducted the autopsy on the broadcaster.

Media groups led by Kilusan ng mga Brod-kaster sa Pilipinas-Albay Chapter, govern-

ment agencies, nongovernment organizations and the public condemned the murder of Villanueva.

Assault on press freedom

The Albay-Legazpi Press Association (Alpa) described the killing as an assault on press freedom and as a dastardly act against a medianman whose only fault was to readily give assistance to anybody who asked for help.

"Jun V had touched the lives of many folk, especially the needy," Alpa said in a statement.

Last year, Villanueva reportedly received an invitation from the 22nd Infantry Battalion based in Lgoa City, asking him to report to its office as it was alleged that he was a "supporter of the New People's Army."

His colleague in dzGB, Lito Brexia, confirmed the existence of the "invitation," which, he said, he had read on the air. Villanueva allegedly ignored the invitation.

Militant organizations asked the police to include the military angle in the investigation.

It was through Villanueva's initiative that an abducted police officer was released by the NPA a couple of years ago. His colleagues and family described the initiative as a deed of a good public servant.

Villanueva had served the broadcast industry for more than 20 years. His programs—Buhay mo, Kapakanan mo, Sagot ko, a public service program, and Banguerahan, a semi-entertainment show—had helped people in need of services and items ranging from medical assistance to coffins for their dead.

Col. Pedrito Magsino, commanding officer of the 901st Infantry Brigade (Separate), dismissed the possible involvement of soldiers in the killing.

In an interview with the INQUIRER Magsino said he did not know about the "letter" sent by the 22IB as he was not yet in his present post at the time.

Because of the killing, Rodgie Abril, president of the KBPA-Albay Chapter, convened all KBP officials in the city yesterday afternoon to come up with measures to ensure the safety of media practitioners in Albay.

In a radio statement aired over dzGB, PNP Chief Hermogenes Ebdane instructed Senior Supt. Pedro Tango, Albay police chief, to speed up the investigation as he condemned the series of killings in the province.

Motorcycles

Tango said his men were investigating the killing and gathering information that could be used in tracing the suspects.

The ambush was patterned after the previous killings in Camalig and neighboring towns in which suspects used motorcycles as their getaway vehicles, according to the Albay police chief.

Chief Insp. Pio Herrera, Camalig police chief, said that based on the accounts of witnesses the suspects were wearing bonnets.

Herrera and his men recovered eight empty shells of .45 cal. pistol from the crime scene and the broken cellular phone of the slain journalist. With a report from AFP

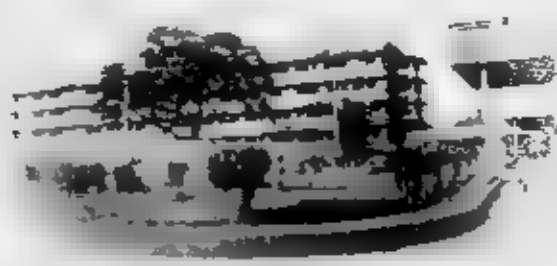
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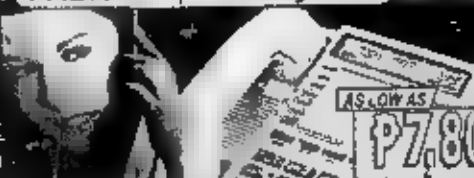
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Oil depot shutdown set

By Jerome Aning
and Abigail L. Ho

BY MIDNIGHT tonight, the oil depot's stay in Pandacan would be illegal, unless the courts grant the appeal of Caltex, Shell and Petron to allow them to continue their operations in the oil facility.

Manila Mayor Lim Atienza yesterday said he would implement City Ordinance No. 8027, which converts the site of the 33-hectare oil facility from an industrial to

a commercial zone, effectively shutting down the oil depot.

The oil firms have sued Atienza to stop him from closing the facility. They also want the courts to declare the ordinance as void, saying that the City Council has failed to prove that the depot is really a public hazard.

Three judges hearing the separate cases filed by the oil firms have asked City Hall to submit its position on the issue yesterday or today so that they could make their ruling soon.

In an interview with reporters, Atienza junked the warnings by the oil firms that the depot's abrupt closure would cause serious fuel price hikes and shortages.

But Energy Secretary Vincent Perez yesterday admitted that the closure of the oil depot could lead to a disruption in supply and an increase in prices of petroleum products. Perez also said that the government could not give an assurance that supply and prices of petroleum products would stay at its current level.

The Pandacan depot provides 82 percent of Metro Manila's oil demand, and 50 percent of Luzon's oil requirement.

Perez said that the closure of the depot will have a serious detrimental impact on supply.

"There can be no normal supply chain without Pandacan," he said in a news briefing yesterday.

The DOE had decided to retain its Emergency Contingency Task Force to tackle a possible crisis resulting from the shutdown of the Pandacan depot. The task force was created to ensure normal fuel supply and price levels during the war against Iraq.

Perez said that the DOE had appealed to the City Council to amend City Ordinance 8027.

But contingency measures have already been put in place by both the government and the oil firms to prevent a worst case scenario, Perez said.

"We're asking oil companies to accelerate supply distribution of petroleum products to various gasoline dealers, to move as much products before the closure," he said.

Members of the Federation of Petroleum Dealers in the Philippines who are based in Luzon said in a statement that product stock-outs in the service stations is very likely since the dealers cannot afford the huge additional cost of maintaining four to five days supply of fuel to make up for longer turnaround time.

With the depot's shutdown, oil supply will now be coming from Batangas and Bataan.

Federation president Mercedes Garcia also warned of more price increases of petroleum product and layoffs of workers at the gas station level.

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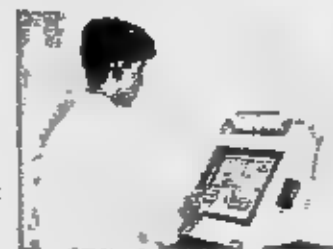
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METROBRIEFS

Nabbed in Malabon

A P10,000 reward led to the arrest of cousins Gilbert Gabriel, 38, and Eric Gabriel, 21, two suspected members of a car theft gang during an entrapment operation in Malabon City last Monday, said District Police Intelligence Unit Chief Insp Sotero Ramos Jr. of the Northern Police District. Police said Emily Arnaiz, 45, sought police assistance regarding the theft of her tricycle. When a P10,000 reward was offered for information on the stolen vehicle, Eric Gabriel approached the victim and offered his help in exchange for the reward. But a background check on Eric showed that he had a criminal record, including theft, and a pending arrest warrant with the Malabon City Metropolitan trial court. An entrapment operation led to the arrest of Eric who led police to the gang's safe house in Pararde, Bulacan and the recovery of the stolen tricycle. **Anna Luisa Villarico**

Killed in Tondo

ROOKIE policeman Harold Polistico, 30, of the PNP-National Capital Region's Special Action Unit, was accused of shooting to death former seaman Neter C. Brazil Jr., 45 during a duel in Tondo, Manila last Monday. Police said the suspect had shot the seaman after the latter destroyed the windows of his mother's house in Tondo. But Polistico surrendered to police after the shooting, according to Detective Edison Bertoldo, of the Western Police District-homicide section. Brazil died from two gunshot wounds in the chest at a hospital, police said. **Philip Tubaza**

Tagged in San Juan

EASTERN Police District Office director Chief Supt. Rolando Sacramento yesterday identified a certain Jay Canlas as one of the suspects in the recent robbery of the Kamameshi Restaurant in Greenhills, San Juan. The victims had picked out Canlas' picture from the police rogues gallery, police said. Canlas and four other suspects had been arrested and charged for robbing customers of Mann Hahn Restaurant and the Port Area Grille in San Juan last year, police said. But Canlas and the other suspects had been released on bail, police added. **Nelson Forte Flores**

Charged in Cainta

GOVERNMENT lawyers have filed criminal charges against four suspected members of a robbery syndicate operating in Rizal province and eastern Metro Manila. Charged before the Municipal Trial Court of Cainta with illegal possession of firearms were brothers Michael and Romeo Sical, Jesus Villaran Sr., all of Cainta, and Antonio Reyes, of Binangonan. The Sical brothers and their companions had been linked to the two slay attempts on former Marikina City Councilor Sonny Parsons.

Nelson Forte Flores



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Editor Abelardo S. Utanday



ACTRESS Aubrey Miles strikes a pose in one of the pictures in the exhibit that has the MTRCB crying foul.

Aubrey exhibit pulled out

Photos too 'sexy, suggestive,' says MTRCB

By Marinel R. Cruz

THE MOVIE and Television Review and Classification Board yesterday ordered the pullout of a steamy photo exhibit featuring Aubrey Miles and the rest of the cast of Regal Entertainment's movie "Xerex."

Describing the photos shown as "too sexy and suggestive," MTRCB chief Conzola Laguardia said she found the photos of Miles, Jake Rozas, Jon Hall and Kalani Ferreria not fit to be displayed in a public place like the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

The photos should have been mounted in a more private venue, like an art gallery, Laguardia said.

The photo exhibit, dubbed "Xperience," was set up at Cinemas 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11 of SM Megamall.

The gallery featured 100 black and white photographs shot by lensman Xander Angeles.

Laguardia said that she found one photo of Miles as suggestive of masturbation, and another where the cast simulated four-way sex.



MILES, with actor Jon Hall, in another controversial exhibit photo.

"In one photo, (Miles) was with three topless males in very seductive poses," the MTRCB chief said.

Laguardia also described as "offending," two topless photos of Miles "holding her breasts."

"It's not an art exhibit, but just an excuse to promote the movie," she said. "Xerex" starts its regular theater run today.

Regal matriarch Lily Monteverde, producer of the movie, said she sees nothing offensive about the pictures.

"The exhibit is a form of art and is made by a notable young artist," Monteverde told the Inquirer.

"Government agencies like the MTRCB should know better than to take life out of a dying movie industry," Monteverde added.

But she agreed to pull out the exhibit, saying that she thought it was not wise to argue with the MTRCB officials, "since they would pull out the pictures anyway."

Monteverde also added that the reason she agreed to the pullout was to spare SM Mega-

mall from the trouble arising from the showing of the exhibit.

She said she only wanted to help the artist by providing a venue for the exhibit.

Laguardia said that she went to the SM Megamall on Monday night with MTRCB board members Zosimo Alegre and Lucy Orense to personally check the exhibit after receiving three phone calls from concerned citizens who complained about the pictures.

"When we got there, we were appalled to see a toddler looking at the pictures," Laguardia said.

The MTRCB chief then called on to all movie producers to act responsibly.

"I hope that this kind of exhibit would not be mounted again in a place that is very accessible to minors like a mall," she said.

Petition for FVR to run anew dismissed

By Agnes Donato

CITING lack of merit, a Quezon City judge has dismissed a petition filed by an ally of former President Fidel Ramos asking the court to decide whether or not former presidents could run for office.

In a two-page order, Judge Estrella Estrada agreed with the Office of the Solicitor General that the petition filed by lawyer and former Kalinga Apayao governor Amado Almazan stated "no cause of action."

Almazan had asked the court to give the "true and correct meaning or interpretation of Article VII, Section 4, Second and Third Sentences" of the Constitution.

That provision reads: "The President shall not be eligible for any reelection. No person who has succeeded as President and has served as such for more than four years shall be qualified for election to the same office at any time."

He had said that the court should clarify whether a person who had served as President and who did not run for the same position immediately after the end of his/her term would be qualified to run again after one or two six-year terms.

In her order, Judge Estrada maintained that Almazan's petition lacked merit.

"A perusal of the allegations in the petition will readily show that it lacks the essential requisites to warrant the grant of declaratory relief by this Court," Estrada said.

The judge also noted that Almazan, despite being a taxpayer and registered voter, did not have the authority to file such a petition. She explained that the provision did not apply to Almazan, as he was neither a former President or a Vice President who had succeeded as President.

Bilibid braces for SARS; Manila readies quarantine measure

By Christian Esguerra, Jerome Aning and Leila Salaverria

STILL reeling from the threat of tuberculosis, New Bilibid Prisons officials are now bracing themselves for a possible bout with the equally deadly SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome).

NBP officials have begun implementing stringent measures to keep the deadly flu-like disease from shipping in its compound in Muntinlupa City and infecting around 17,000 inmates there.

The NBP cannot afford to handle another serious disease because it still has at least 275 inmates afflicted with TB, according to Dr. Zoraida Ocampo, medical coordinator of the Bureau of Corrections.

The Department of Health had earlier reported that there were at least 1,000 prisoners with tuberculosis at the NBP.

We're preparing for the possibility of fighting a war on two

fronts, Ocampo yesterday told the INQUIRER.

Quarantine in Manila

In Manila, the city council may bear Congress in upgrading quarantine laws in the country to stem the spread of SARS.

City lawmakers are expected to approve today an ordinance prescribing a mandatory 10-day quarantine period for persons suspected to have SARS.

The ordinance, which was proposed by Mayor Lito Atienza and introduced by the majority councilors, revises the outdated quarantine provisions of the city's revised charter.

Any person who refused to undergo quarantine would be jailed six months, or fined P6,000, or suffer both penalties if the courts so decide.

Under the proposal, all suspected SARS victims will be quarantined in an "appropriate and suitable place" at the Ospital ng Maynila in Malate.

The OsMa director is instructed to take into consideration the health and welfare of medical workers and patients in setting up the quarantine area.

The council also tackled another ordinance allowing the mayor to use the city's calamity fund "to institute immediate and serious remedial and emergency measures" to monitor and address problems brought about by the SARS threat.

Plea for honesty

Metro Manila Development Authority Chair Bayani Fernando yesterday appealed for honesty in the battle to prevent the spread of SARS in the metropolis.

Speaking before health and local government officials during a conference at the MMDA yesterday, Fernando said that it is important to be transparent about the presence of possible SARS victims in a local area so that the necessary measures can be taken to ensure that no other

person would be infected.

He cited as example the case of China, where authorities tried to hide the spread of the SARS virus but failed in their attempt after the virus began killing off hundreds of people.

At the same time, some health officials also asked Fernando to help dispel residents' anxieties over SARS, which have caused some people to go into panic-buying.

In recent weeks, they said a mad rush to acquire surgical and protective masks pushed the prices of the items up—more than double their original costs.

Fernando yesterday also suggested that a SARS hotline be set up in Metro Manila so that cases can be reported immediately.

DOH officials also informed local health officials that when transporting SARS patients, it would be better if only health workers would accompany the patient. With a report from Jamie Alarcon

Insincere, cops' group says of Lacson ad

By Philip Tubeza

IMMODEST and insincere.

This was how the Manila's Finest Brotherhood Association Inc., described the recent advertisements of former national police chief and now presidential aspirant Panfilo Lacson.

The group debunked the advertisement's claims that Lacson "had eradicated the 'kotong' cops, kidnap-for-ransom, and 'carnapping' gangs during his incumbency as (national police) chief, by sheer guts, dedication to duty, and exceptional leadership qualities."

"The brotherhood takes exception to the sweeping claims of the ads," said the MBFAI

in a statement signed by its officers.

"The apprehensions and neutralization of the people involved in these crimes during (Lacson's) incumbency as PNP chief are the results of the joint efforts of different PNP units and other law enforcement agencies," the group said. "Bluntly stated, it is immodest for (Lacson) to claim sole credit for whatever transpired during his incumbency."

The MBFAI is made up mostly of the policemen serving in the Western Police District.

"It is claimed by the ads that these crimes are taking place again," the group said. "The conclusion is put across that they are the major source of the

country's economic woes."

"(But) the truth of the matter is that these crimes were not totally eradicated during his incumbency as PNP chief."

The group also noted that some of Lacson's subordinates have been charged for the Kuratong Baleleng case and the abduction and murder of PR practitioner Bobby Dacer and his driver.

"The Senator's program, with respect to the PNP, centered exclusively on discipline, militaristic at that... it should have been multi-dimensional," the MBFAI said.

"The political advertisements are at best, shallow, myopic, and insincere. As it is, it is a political advertisement and nothing more."

Soriquez vows to carry on BF's public works projects

By Blanche Rivera and Leila Salaverria

BAYANI Fernando may have given up the public works portfolio, but the man who replaced him, Florante Soriquez, has vowed to carry on with the projects that Fernando started.

"We both want to get things done," said Soriquez, the acting public works secretary.

Soriquez yesterday assured anxious officials of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority that Fernando's decision to give up his post in the Department of Public Works and Highways would not change the pace of projects.

His first order of business, in fact, was to order an inventory of ongoing

projects and check whether they were moving according to schedule.

Soriquez said that he wanted to fast-track the projects during his short stint as DPWH chief.

"I have no plans of derailing MMDA projects," Soriquez said in an interview yesterday. "I do not want to hamper them, unless of course there are problems with the papers."

"I would not want to get in trouble with the Ombudsman," he added, laughing.

Meanwhile, Fernando has received extended powers from the President over projects concerning the National Capital Region.

The MMDA chair yesterday said that the President has given "verbal instructions" that the NCR would be under his

"functional supervision."

"This is basically an expansion of my job as RDC (Regional Development Council) chair," he said of his new powers.

Under the concept of functional supervision, Fernando said he would be controlling the deployment of funds for the projects, and would have a hand in the management of all major development ventures in the NCR. All large-scale projects would be subject to his approval.

He said that by controlling the money, he could virtually control the whole project as well.

He said that all NCR regional directors of government agencies are under him, and their projects must have the approval of the RDC before they can be

implemented.

As MMDA Chair, Fernando is automatically the head of the RDC, which is already the most powerful agency in Metro Manila.

Fernando yesterday also vowed to keep the harmonious coordination between the DPWH and the MMDA.

Fernando used to head both agencies, until Malacañang announced on Sunday that he has given up the DPWH and would be replaced by Soriquez.

Soriquez, 60, was sworn into office as acting DPWH secretary on Monday.

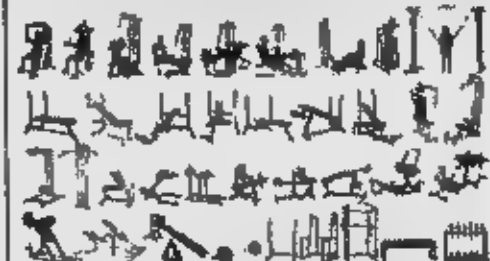
His appointment has since been opposed by legislators, who cited the graft charges pending against the new DPWH chief over the megadike project in Pampanga.

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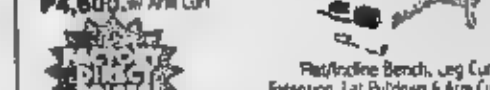
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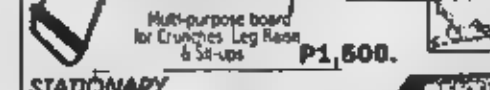
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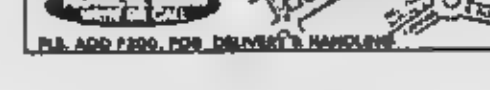
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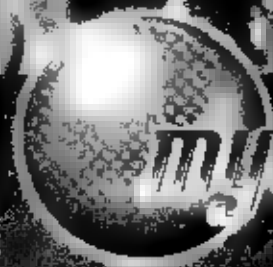
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Shabu use costs Torion P2.2M

GAMES TODAY (Makati Coliseum)
5:00 p.m.—Talk N Text vs Alaska
7:30 p.m.—Coca-Cola vs Shell

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE SEASON-LONG ban on Jimwell Torion also means the Batang Red Bull star cannot be present in any PBA game for the rest of the year.

But other than the scorn imposed by the PBA on the Cebuano cage sensation, who tested positive for shabu use, Torion will be paying a stiff price for the offense: P2.25 million to be exact.

This will be the total cost of his salary for

the rest of the season.

Red Bull manager Tony Chua yesterday said they have no choice but to withhold Torion's P250,000 a month salary until such time the PBA decides to exonerate him, which would be after December at the earliest.

A contrite Torion appeared yesterday at the PSA Forum at the Holiday Inn to ask for forgiveness from basketball fans.

He also vowed to help educate people about the dangers of using drugs.

Torion, 28, was found to have used shabu after a random drug testing conducted by the PBA during their game last Palm Sunday.

He readily admitted that he used the banned substance during a wild party in Cebu weeks before.

"I'm willing to accept all responsibility for whatever punishment they will impose on me," he said.

He said he was appealing for understanding from the public.

The hyper-active player said the incident made him ponder his future and that of his wife and four

kids, ages 1 1/2 to eight years old.

Torion, who narrowly escaped death after figuring in a car mishap just before the 2000 PBA season began, said he is still paying for the house and lot he acquired in Antipolo last year.

"That's my biggest problem," said Torion, referring to P84,000 monthly amortization for the property. "And I still have to find ways to support my kids' schooling."

Batang Red Bull management said it had to do what was proper.

"He's an integral part of the team and a very obedient player but we want to teach



SHABU/A3 TORION

WHAT'S INSIDE



Davadilla strikes again in Tour /A26



76ers, Kings take 3-1 leads /A28

Bare Eye: Star in the time of SARS

/A29

Welcoat edges John-O, 58-54

GAMES TOMORROW (Makati Coliseum)
2 p.m.—8lu Star vs John-O; 4 p.m.—Welcoat vs ICTSI; 6 p.m.—Viva Mineral Water vs RP Team

WELCOAT Paints, riding on the dominating show of Jean Marc Pingris, silenced John-O in the final four minutes to tally a 58-54 victory yesterday and stay on track for an automatic semifinals slot in the Sunkist PBL 2003 Unity Cup at the Pasig Sports Center.

Though nursing a slight flu, the 6-foot-6 Pingris notched a double-double with 19 points and a conference-high 20 rebounds, leading the Paint Masters to their fourth win in nine starts.

John-O fell to 6-3, but is almost sure of joining idle Hapee Toothpaste (7-2) into the pre-finals.

Roy Luarca

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TOUR PILIPINAS SHAKE-UP

Davadilla wins again; Ramos grabs lead

By June Navarro

LUCENA CITY (via PLDT)—Warren Davadilla, the last champion of the previous Tour before it folded up in 1998, struck anew by winning the fourth stage yesterday that saw a shake-up in the overall race of the Tour Pilipinas 2003 here.

Duplicating his triumph in the third stage, Davadilla finished the 207-kilometer stage in five hours, three minutes and 48 seconds as he jumped to 3rd from 16th place overall.

Mercutio Ramos became the new overall leader after checking in eighth and posting an accumulated time of 14 hours, 5 minutes and 46 seconds.

"This is what I've been waiting for. When I saw Arnel (Quirmit) and Santy (Barnachea) looking after each other, I made my move," said Ramos, the pride of Batang-bata, Tarlac City.

"I just maintained my pace even in the mountains but I didn't

expect to break away that easy from the lead pack," said Davadilla, an auto mechanic graduate from Malabon, in Tagalog after finishing the race two minutes and 25 seconds ahead of Intel teammate Paulo Manapol.

Manapol and Frederick Feliciano of the Drugbusters crossed the finish line second and third, respectively, with an identical time of five hours, six minutes and 13 seconds.

Davadilla broke loose while ascending the slopes of Atimonan, known as the "Fating Eme," leaving behind a slew of riders that included Manapol, Feliciano, Carlo Jazul, Lito Atilano, Enrique Domingo and Arnold Marcelo.

The exploits of Davadilla and Manapol catapulted Intel from eighth to the top of the team standings, thereby dislodging early leaders Tandauy Distillers and Bowling Gold in the race for the P1-million champion team's pot.

Tandauy's Arnel Quirmit, the overall leader prior to the race, relinquished the yellow jersey to



DAVADILLA pedals his way through "Bitukang Manok" in Atimonan, Quezon en route to solo victory in the 4th lap.

Ramos of Samsung after puncturing his front tire in the town of Talisay, just two kilometers from the start.

"I waited for almost 20 minutes before our team mechanic

changed the tire. When I got back in the race, the lead pack was already gone," said Quirmit, who fell to sixth overall, five minutes and 13 seconds behind Ramos, after winding up 21st in today's

race. "But it's okay. I'm not really bothered about losing the yellow jersey. I'm still in contention anyway," added the Army man from Pozzorubio, Pangasinan.

Placido Valdez of Drugbusters moved up from fourth overall to second while Barnachea, who held on to second place in the last two laps, plummeted to 15th.

The Pagcor Sports duo of Lloyd Reynante and Rhyann Taguilig also climbed to fourth and fifth after landing eighth and ninth in the third stage.

Pagcor Sports remained at fourth in the team standings while Patrol 117 and Ecosavers improved to second and third, respectively.

Tandauy and Bowling Gold plummeted to seventh and eighth after leading the Tour presented by Air 21 and sponsored by Philtranco, Look-Vittoria, Longines, Accel, Lipovitan, Salle Italia, FedEx and Mail & More, for three days.

Gilbey's Island Punch, Drugbusters, Postmen and PLDTNDD continue to struggle as they occupy the lower rung of the standings.

Ramos will don the yellow jersey today from this city up to Tagaytay City, approximately 175 kilometers of well-paved roads with a couple of uphill turns near the finish.

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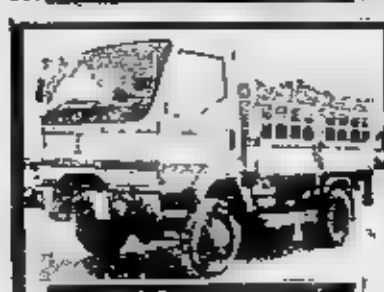
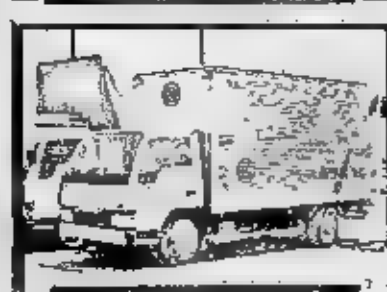
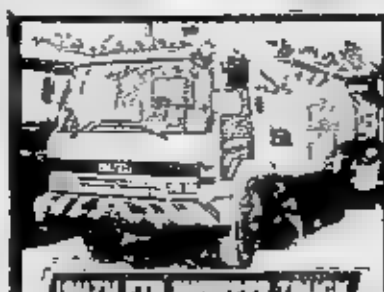
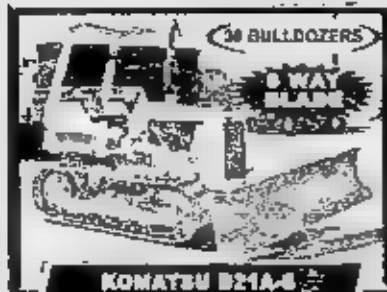
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Overall Standings

RANK	RIDER	TIME	RANK	RIDER	TIME
1	MERCUTIO RAMOS	14h05'46.630	45	JOEL GUILLEN	00h34'31.660
2	PLACIDO VALDEZ	00h01'39.110	46	OSCAR FRONDA	00h35'23.200
3	WARREN DAVADILLA	00h03'31.319	47	AVELINO BAYUGA	00h38'24.561
4	LLOYD REYNANTE	00h05'06.890	48	RAZON GALDONES	00h38'31.400
5	RHYAN TANGUILIG	same	49	ART DELA CRUZ	00h39'13.841
6	ARNEL QUIRMIT	00h05'13.84	50	MICHAEL GONOWON	00h39'52.270
7	EUSEBIO OL NONES	00h05'58.990			
8	BERNARD LUZON	00h06'13.870			
9	ENRIQUE DOMINGO	00h07'33.820			
10	FERNANDO ALAGANO	00h09'00.340			
11	BENITO LOPEZ	00h09'27.261			
12	RONALDO GORRANTES	00h10'55.25			
13	RENATO DOLOSA	00h10'58.57			
14	FREDERICK FELICIANO	00h12'34.822			
15	SANTI BARNACHEA	00h13'01.820			
16	CARLO JAZUL	00h13'05.380			
17	ARNOLD MARCELO	00h14'58.672			
18	JOSEPH MILLANES	00h15'21.272			
19	LITO ATILANO	00h16'35.699			
20	PATERNITO CURTAN	00h17'52.360			
21	CARLO GLEB	00h18'20.341			
22	REINHARD GORRANTES	00h18'27.463			
23	SHERWIN DIAMASAY	00h18'49.721			
24	ARNEL ESPINO	00h19'21.932			
25	ERICSON OBOSA	00h19'44.691			
26	PAULO MANAPOL	00h20'15.140			
27	ROLANDO PAGNANAWON	00h20'40.773			
28	JOEL CALDERON	00h21'51.733			
29	ALFIE CATALAN	00h22'39.311			
30	DANNY GANIGAN	00h24'13.224			
31	MANUEL MENDOZA	00h24'17.124			
32	ALBERT PRIMERO	same			
33	REYNALDO NAVARRO	00h24'37.751			
34	FELIX CELESTE	00h24'53.890			
35	GERRY AMAR	00h25'13.504			
36	MICHAEL REYES	00h25'45.162			
37	ARTHUR BUCAY	00h25'49.011			
38	RUEL CASALJAY	00h27'28.32			
39	WILFREDO CALOSA	00h29'31.180			
40	DIONISIO MENDOZA	00h29'48.933			
41	MILO ESTAYO	00h32'39.74			
42	DIONISIO POSILERO	00h32'59.349			
43	DOMINADOR JACOB	00h33'08.411			
44	RODELJO VALDEZ	same			

4TH LAP STANDINGS

RANK	RIDER	TIME
1	WARREN DAVADILLA	06h03'48.140
2	PAULO MANAPOL	00h02'25.22
3	FREDERICK FELICIANO	same
4	BERNARD LUZON	00h02'48.68
5	ENR QUE DOMINGO	same
6	LITO ATILANO	00h03'10.44
7	PLACIDO VALDEZ	same
8	MERCUTIO RAMOS	same
9	RENATO DOLOSA	00h04'04.4
10	CARLO JAZUL	same
11	FERNANDO ALAGANO	same
12	RHYAN TANGUILIG	00h04'10.54
13	LLOYD REYNANTE	same
14	ARNOLD MARCELO	same
15	JOSEPH MILLANES	same

TEAM STANDINGS

PLACE	TEAM	TIME	DEFICIT
1	INTEL	57h07'23.31	
2	PAGCOR	57h15'29.99	00h08'06.67
3	PATROL 117	57h19'00.34	00h11'37.03
4	TANDAUY	57h20'45.68	00h13'22.57
5	DISTILLERS	57h23'19.87	00h15'56.56
6	ECO SAVERS	57h32'50.53	00h25'27.21
7	POSTMEN	57h34'41.80	00h27'18.49
8	VAT R DERS	57h38'09.13	00h30'45.81
9	BOWLING GOLD	57h47'50.32	00h40'27.01
10	DRUGBUSTERS	57h50'39.81	00h43'16.50
11	GILBEYS	58h01'55.46	00h54'32.14
12	ISLAND PUNCH	58h39'28.35	01h32'05.04

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Wolen Juan wraps it up with a 64

By Jong Arcano

TWO WEEKS ago, Wolen Juan Superal missed setting a record of three consecutive sub-par rounds by a mere stroke after a bogey on the last hole.

This week, Superal is on his way to several scoring marks with his mind-boggling eight-under-par 64 effort yesterday believed to be one of the lowest ever set by a player in his age-group as he got victory No. 5 in the Samsung Jungolf Tour in the bag with still one round to go.

That 64 from the special tees was so far the lowest score in the hot summer, a stroke better than the 65 the 10-year-old Superal himself set in the first round at the Player course of the Orchard Golf and Country Club in Dasmarinas, Cavite.

Wolen's second round scorecard showed an eagle on the fourth, eight birdies against only two bogeys—a round that sent him skyrocketing ahead by 24 over James Christian Ricohermoso in Class D, a division for players 9-10 years old. His 15-under aggregate of 129 should also make it to the books as the best ever.

The Superals are in for a double celebration after Wolen's elder sister Crystal Faith Superal put herself on the brink of victory with a 16-stroke lead over Cyna Marie Rodriguez in girls Class C. Crystal, rebounding from her disqualification in the Junior World qualifier last week, scored a 77 for 162.

Pagcor should lead war against SARS

ONE government agency that could very well play an important role in the all-out war against the dreaded SARS is the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp., which runs the profitable casino operations across the country. Being awash with cash, Pagcor

CLEAN LIVING



Manolo R.
Inigo

should lead the campaign to contain the flu-like disease which has—as of yesterday—killed 321 people and infected more than 28 countries.

Aside from embarking on a massive information campaign and providing financial assistance to various agencies concerned, Pagcor should also conduct the health screening of casino patrons and provide them with protective masks because several casino players are foreigners, including nationals from China, the country most affected by the killer disease. While it could be costly to provide casino players with these masks, it is still one solution to stop the spread of SARS and prevent further loss of lives. No amount of money is too much to forestall the outbreak of this contagious and deadly disease.

Already, beer giant San Miguel Corp. of boss Danding Cojuangco has launched a comprehensive anti-SARS campaign by issuing surgical masks to its employees and guests. It has also set up quarters for the mandatory 10-day quarantine for people coming from SARS-affected countries. The same measures are being implemented by its sister companies, Purefoods, Coca-Cola and Ginebra. On the other hand, Donald Dee, corporate secretary of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, has also embarked on massive anti-SARS campaign for the protection of their employees and visitors.

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76ers take sting out of Hornets

Kings frustrate Jazz for 3-1 lead

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However, five other Sixers finished in double figures, as Iverson duly noted. "I had trouble all night," he admitted. "I could never catch a rhythm. But my teammates picked me up." Eric Snow added 17 points, including a key jumper after the Hornets closed to within a point in the late going.

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Baron Davis had 34 points in a losing effort.

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"But we stuck with it. You have to stay the course," Peja Stojakovic went one better with 27 points, 15 of them in the third quarter.

"We were aggressive in the second half," Stojakovic said.

Veteran Karl Malone paced the Jazz with 24 points, with Matt Harpring adding 18.

Malone was given a brief standing ovation when he left late in the game, possibly his last in Salt Lake. **Reuters**



MALONE shows his frustration after a foul was called against him in the fourth quarter. **REUTERS**

Popovich named NBA coach of the year

SAN ANTONIO—Gregg Popovich won the NBA Coach of the Year award on Monday for leading the San Antonio Spurs to the league's best record.

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Golden State Warriors coach Eric Musselman was second with 26 first-place votes, and Utah Jazz coach Jerry Sloan was third (18).

Popovich, San Antonio's coach since December 1996, led the Spurs to their third straight Midwest Division title and a 60-22 record.

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by 8 1/2 games in the division, but the Spurs went 41-9, beginning Jan. 1, to pass the Mavericks in the final week of the season.

Popovich has a regular-season record of 339-185, giving him the most wins of any San Antonio coach, and he has a .647 winning percentage over seven seasons.

He is 35-26 in the playoffs.

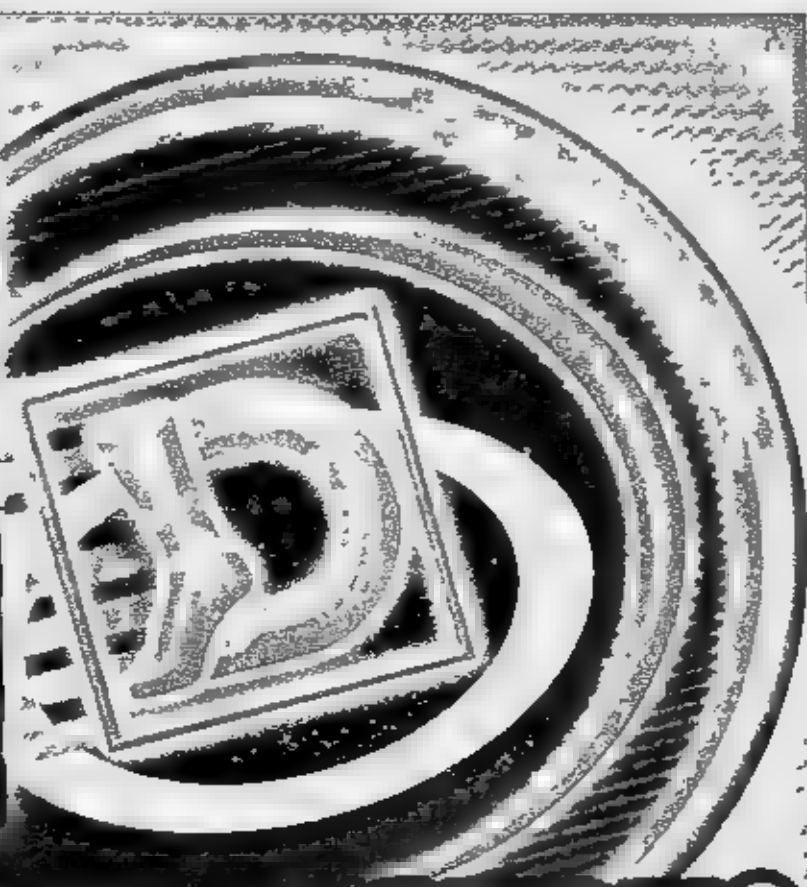
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The Spurs have won at least 50 games in five of the past six seasons. In the strike-shortened 1998-99 season, San Antonio was 39-13 and went on to win its first NBA championship. **AP**



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CLAIMING PRIZES

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SPORTSTV

Compiled by L. Mangiat

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EASTERN CONFERENCE

(1) Detroit vs. (8) Orlando
Magic 3, Pistons 1
Game 1: Orlando 99, Detroit 94
Game 2: Detroit 89, Orlando 77
Game 3: Orlando 89, Detroit 80
Game 4: Orlando 100, Detroit 92
Game 5 at Detroit (May 1)

(2) New Jersey vs (7) Milwaukee
Nets 2, Bucks 2
Game 1: New Jersey 109, Milwaukee 96
Game 2: Milwaukee 88, New Jersey 85
Game 3: New Jersey 103, Milwaukee 101
Game 4 Milwaukee 119, New Jersey 114
Game 5 at New Jersey (April 30)

(3) Indiana vs (6) Boston
Pacers 1, Celtics 3
Game 1: Boston 103, Indiana 100
Game 2: Indiana 89, Boston 77
Game 3: Boston 101, Indiana 83
Game 4: Boston 102, Indiana 92
Game 5 at Indiana (April 30)

(4) Philadelphia vs (5) N. Orleans
Sixers 3, Hornets 1
Game 1: Philadelphia 98, New Orleans 90
Game 2: Philadelphia 90, New Orleans 85
Game 3: New Orleans 99, Philadelphia 85
Game 4: Philadelphia 96, New Orleans 87
Game 5 at Philadelphia (May 1)

Spurs 2, Suns 2
Game 1 Phoenix 96, San Antonio 95 (OT)
Game 2: San Antonio 84, Phoenix 76
Game 3: San Antonio 99, Phoenix 86
Game 4: Phoenix 86, San Antonio 84
Game 5 at San Antonio (April 30)

(2) Sacramento vs (7) Utah
Kings 3, Jazz 1
Game 1: Sacramento 96, Utah 90
Game 2: Sacramento 108, Utah 95
Game 3 Utah 107, Sacramento 104
Game 4: Sacramento 99, Utah 82
Game 5 at Sacramento (May 1)

(3) Dallas vs (6) Portland
Mavs 3, Blazers 1
Game 1: Dallas 96, Portland 86
Game 2: Dallas 103, Portland 99
Game 3: Dallas 115, Portland 103
Game 4: Portland 98, Dallas 79
Game 5 at Dallas (May 1)

(4) Minnesota vs. (5) LA Lakers
Wolves 2, Lakers 2
Game 1: LA Lakers 117, Minnesota 98
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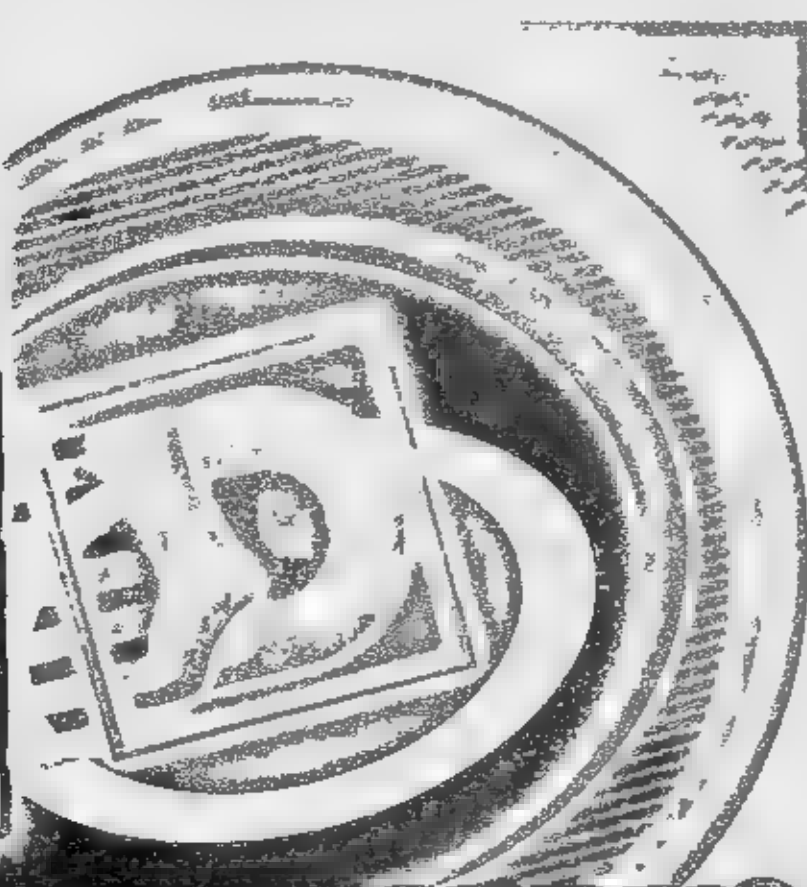
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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0251 Series of 2003

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Star in the time of SARS

HE was a coach's darling. The crowd's too.

If his team, buried in deep anxiety, needed a big basket, he was always there to deliver, on the dot, like your trusted mailman.

He was often magical with his precise, arching long shots.

He was a miracle man who could restore faith in prayers.

Take it from one who has seen it all. In the Taipei Jones Cup of 1985, 1990 Beijing Asiad, ABC championship in Kuala Lumpur 1986, even in the Geroaa (Spain) World Club Basketball championship.

Allan Caidic was the big hero many times over, both for the Philippine team and his mother squad.

That said, if goes without saying that the deep misery Caidic has been suffering in the Ginebra

team bench is definitely not a result of karma.

If this is payback time, the guy deserves the best he could get from what he has invested.

He has been very good to the game.

He will remain one of Philippine basketball's most remarkable heroes.

In fact, they may have to build a monument for him when the time comes.

So, pardon my asking this: why are his players at Ginebra performing as though they wanted Caidic to lose his job?

Why are his players paying him back with, yes, trash?

No kidding. You have seen the series of awful Ginebra setbacks, capped by its last game against Coca-Cola.

That last outing was not a

BARE EYE



Recab Trinidad

game, it was an anomaly.

Yes, Ginebra nearly scored a record in infancy, but luckily only matched the horrendous two-point output by a team in a quarter.

The team also ended up a cheap, laughing stock.

Actually, nobody had expected Ginebra to win all its games.

But when the current season started, and with the team getting dream additions in all positions, Ginebra inevitably became a top pick to qualify early.

Sorry folks, Ginebra is back in that familiar place, close to the

bottom, an uneasy schoolkid all set to excuse itself and go out.

In fact, it's said coach Caidic, still puzzled, had admitted he had tried his best but could not get the desired results.

There was this supposed bull session where practically all team members ended up admitting their mistakes.

Yes, the Gin Kings were all trying very hard, but it's no plain coincidence Team Ginebra keeps falling flat, hard, on its face.

Why? It's easy to see that the Gin Kings, in each trying their best, often end up outdoing one another. They often do things their own way.

There was, for example, the chief point guard who goes out to score, with the expected pass to the open man only a poor, second option.

Listen. A deeper look would bare that Ginebra has the ideal ingredients but sorely lacks the right chemistry.

The pieces would not fit, resulting into the team being robbed of extra dimension.

Of course, Ginebra still swears and lives by that so-called never-say-die spirit, rendered legendary by predecessors led by Sen. Robert Jaworski.

No need to consult the Big J, who would readily swear that his Ginebra team lived and die by the Big D-defense!

Clearly, the sorriest aspect of this new-day Ginebra team is that, unlike Big J's hardy bunch, it relies, oh so heavily, on artillery.

It would help if the team would fight harder to hold down opponents, instead of trying to outscore them at every turn.

No need to ask coach Caidic. Turning his players into mean, unforgiving defenders overnight is easier said than done.

It's indeed a thankless job Caidic has inherited.

Why? With the team buildup, there were great expectations the Ginebra would finally go places this year.

He was, in short, put in a no-win situation.

If they qualified, critics would say it was just to be expected, considering the terrific manpower buildup.

Still, the big question is: Why is misery hounding coach Allan Caidic like a curse, as though he had been unkind to the game and his past coaches?

Unthinkable. There's no reason why he has to be billed the star in the time of the SARS epidemic.

SPORTSWATCH

Routs mark cagefest

ROUTES marked the Nike Battlegrounds knockout games recently at the Phelps Dodge Gym in Mandaluyong City. Merville beat Wack, 103-56, while Ayala Alabang massacred San Miguel Village, 110-48. Also posting convincing victories were Magallanes, Bel-Air Greenmeadows, Philam Village and San Lorenzo Village. Magallanes trounced Palm Village, 81-68; Bel-Air beat Mariana Village, 100-73; Greenmeadows dumped Loyola Heights, 68-54; Philam outplayed Dasmariñas, 87-68; and San Lorenzo Village clobbered Valls Verde, 110-70.

Cagas tops qualifiers

QUEZON City's Dante Cagas topped the last 20 qualifiers for the 1st Tour of Isabela when he ruled the Palila-Jala-Jala to Mabitan race on Sunday. Cagas, clocked 1 hour 30 minutes, 43.04 seconds for the 53-km uphill climb. The 60 finalists will try to match or beat 1996 Tour of Luzon champion Victor Espiritu, one of seven seeded cyclists in the 3-day Isabela Day race that starts on May 7. Also seeded were Villamor Baluyot, Wilson Blas and four junior members of the national team. David Perez and Joel Bahucus of the Philippine Air Force cycling team came in second and third, respectively.

Mandaue tennis May 3

JOSEPH Victorino will be seeking his third straight title when the third Mandaue City National men's Tennis Open is held May 3-9 at the Mantada court. Victorino will be opposed by fellow Davis Cupper Johnny Arcilla and other top players. Registration is open at the Phila offices (tel. 525-6434). Players may also contact Cherry Quano (032-3443322 and 032-3451527 loc. 204) and tournament referee Godfrey Caliao (0919-2315991).

Challenge Cup leader



DE LA MERCED

GABY de la Merced posted 36 points after four rounds to lead the SMI Challenge Cup overall standings at the Subic International Raceway. The 20-year-old fine arts student also took pole position in the qualifying round, half a second ahead of teammate Mikko David.

Magdal paces kegfest

THE GRAND National and Youth duckpin bowling championships roiled off recently with NSBA's Boying Magdal and the pair of Nez S. Magbual (D Friendly) and Vey Manalo (MDBC) taking the lead in the A/B singles event at the Marketplace lanes. Magdal rolled a two-game series of 452 pins to pace Winnie Sotton (411), Louie Tandin-gan (397), Va. Amazan (397), Bert Sa.les (397), Ding de Guzman (396), and Caloy Inocencio (394) in the men's division. Magbual and Manalo carded 385s to move ahead of Somo Qutallig (382), Lorenz Hilas (381), Geena Gregorio (370), Ruby Villamil (358), Maa Aregla (355) and Baby Inocencio (355) in the ladies group.

4-cocker lures 60 bets

AT least 50 entries are expected to take part in a 4-cock derby to be hosted by sportsman Babot Yu on June 13 at the Pasay City Cockpit. For an entry of P10,000, the guaranteed prize is at least P300,000. Minimum bet is P5,500 in the event sponsored by Sagupaan B-50 Forten. For inquiries and cockhouse reservation, call 816-6750, 843-1890 and 843-1746.

Dumaguete hosts triathlon

THE THIRD leg of the Enervon-National Age Group Triathlon (NAGT) 2003 Series will be held in Dumaguete City on Sunday with around 70 to 80 participants. It will cater to the 16 and above triathletes. Those who are 5 to 15 years old may compete in the first leg of the Fit and Tri Youth Triathlon series set at the Las Villas de Manila in Bifan, Laguna.

Nasa invites skydiver

CHAMPION skydiver Lt. Commander Irene Malutao Mora, pilot of the Philippine Coast Guard Auxiliary Operation Wing, has been given invitation by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. This is the first time a Filipino was given such recognition by the NASA. Mora, 30, bested more than 2,000 participants in winning the gold wing in the Friendship Airborne 2003 International Skydiving Championship in Bangkok recently.

Goddard joins Subic F3

FILIPINOS get the chance to see Formula 3 action when the first leg of the Asian Formula 3 Series is held May 10-11 at the Subic International raceway inside the Subic Bay Freeport. Defending AF3 champion and Castrol Armbi Pur driver Mark Goddard of the United Kingdom, 2002 AF2000 champion Dennis Lian of Singapore, 2002 Asian Formula Renault titleholder Enzo Pastor of the Philippines and 2001 Philippine Formula 3 champion Jojo Silverio of the Philippines have confirmed their participation.

Roy Luarca

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John braves SARS fear, goes to Canada to be with Vanessa

B10

ENTERTAINMENT

Get ready for Mikey, Governor Lapid



LAPID



ARROYO

By Tonette Orejas
PDI Central Luzon Desk

GUAGUA, Pampanga—Movie actor and Pampanga Vice Gov. Juan Miguel "Mikey" Arroyo's birthday celebration here last Saturday looked every bit an early campaign for his congressional bid in Pampanga's second district, some local politicians observed.

But Arroyo, the eldest son of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said there was no political motive behind the simultaneous events held on his 34th birthday at the plaza of this town, the biggest town in the district in terms of votes.

"I've always celebrated my birthday in the district since 2001 (when he was elected vice governor)," Arroyo told the *Inquirer*. "There's no political color to this. I simply wanted to celebrate it in a significant way, like delivering social services that the people deserve."

It was the first time that Arroyo chose Guagua, the commercial center of the second

district, as the site of the social services caravan of his office.

At the Gomburza town plaza, the Department of Health held an "Operation Tuli" (circumcision) for 400 boys, the Department of Labor and Employment opened a job fair while the Department of Environment and Natural Resources distributed land titles to 73 families.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development held a supplemental feeding program for children and distributed food packs to about 500 families. The vice governor's office also gave out 1,000 food packs.

The Department of Agriculture gave out 1,000 seedlings of tamarind, 1,000 of duhat and 1,000 of achuete.

Luli, Arroyo's sister, mobilized a friend's company, which is involved in the hairstyling business, to provide free haircut for residents.

Arroyo also tapped the Pampanga chapter of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines to provide free legal counseling.

He gave loans worth P50,000 each to four

rural workers' associations in Porac, the hometown of Pampanga Gov. Manuel Lapid.

The biggest set of projects that Arroyo announced was the P70 million worth of bridges in Guagua (P15.204 million), Floridablanca (P13.042 million), Sta. Rita (P8.042 million), Lubao (P17.226 million) and in Porac (P13.042 million).

Public Works Undersecretary Salvador Pleyto said these projects would be funded by the President's P2-billion "Tulay ng Pangulo" which in turn is a project funded by the British government.

The proposed five bridges would have a life span of 100 years, Pleyto told the *Inquirer* before the groundbreaking ceremony.

Arroyo said he and Lapid have worked to have the projects implemented in the poorest and flood-prone parts of the district.

He started the day by attending a Mass at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral here, accompanied by his wife Angela. The cathedral was packed with well-wishers that included politicians.

Mossimo Bikini summit to pick new 'Jordan Herrera'



MENDOZA

SO WHO will be the Jordan Herrera wannabe in this year's batch of hopefuls in the Mossimo Bikini Summit?

Jordan placed only second in the 2002 Mossimo bikini summit but he has been the competition's biggest product so far. Last year's male grand prize winner, Carlo Maceda, is now also in the movies but not as big a star as Jordan. Last year's top female winner, Ritchie Bingsang, looked like a very good movie material but has not been heard of after the Boracay finals in April 2002. She is said to have gone to the United States.

SHOW STOPPERS

This year, 12 buff young men and 12 shapely young women screened from more than 500 applicants are competing in the Mossimo Bikini Summit, to be held at Club Panoly Resort in Boracay. They are Mico Arellano, Siegfried Monserrat, KC Thadani, Adrian Zabala III, Rodolfo Solis, Albert Gumto, Spencer Concepcion, Jerome Uy, Angel James Dee, Jonas Jason Baltasar, Ronald Brent Javier and Deone Dasallas; and Dyan Acuesta, Joyce Andres, Mary Ann Mendoza, Fatima Mbengue, Elaine Gardula, Chinschelle Magaspi, Angel Mendoza, Liza Camerling, Kristine-Mari Arboleda, Bernadeth Mercado, Julia Duncan and Tessa MacDonald.

The finals night will be on May 3, 7 p.m., at the beachfront of Club Panoly. It will be hosted by TJ Manotoc, Angel Jacob and Carlo Maceda, now a contract star of Viva Films. The show will also feature performances by Luke Mejares, Viva Records' new Fil-Am all-male singing group Devotion, and Maui Taylor, Katya Santos, Gwen Garcia and Jen Rosendhal of Viva Hot Babes, with the Whiplash Dancers.

The candidates will be wearing bikinis by Mossimo and the summer collection of Edwin Uy and Mel Vergel de Dios.

Stage and fashion direction is by Duds Santiago, with TV direction by Calvin Neria. The finals night will be shown on RPN-9, the Mossimo Bikini Summit 2003's official network, on May 25 as the featured special on Sunday's Big Event.

For more information about the 2003 Mossimo Bikini Summit, stay tuned to its official radio stations, 88.3 Cityline, 89.9 DWIM, Wave 89.1, 103.5 K-Lite, 105.1 Crossover and 99.5 RL.



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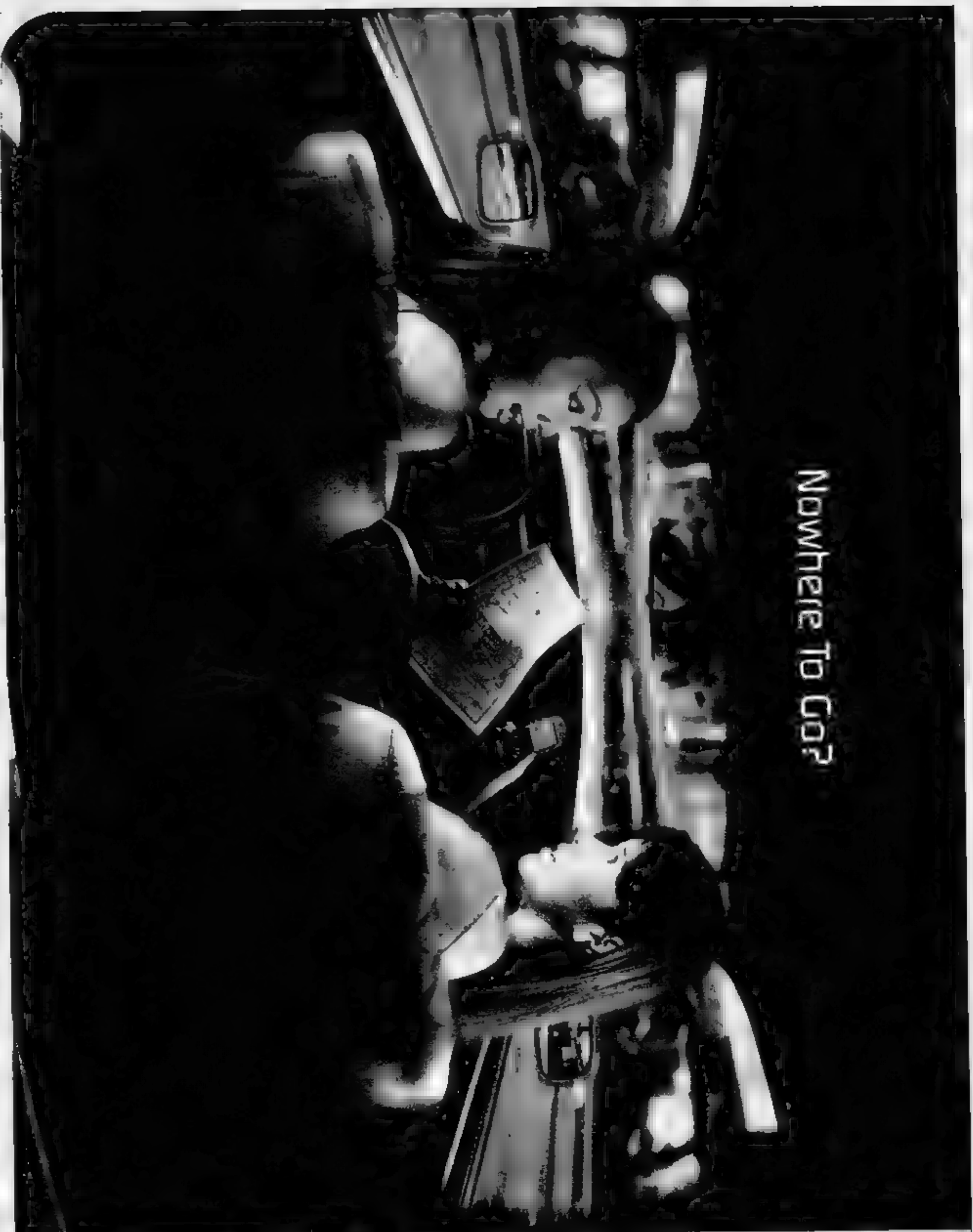
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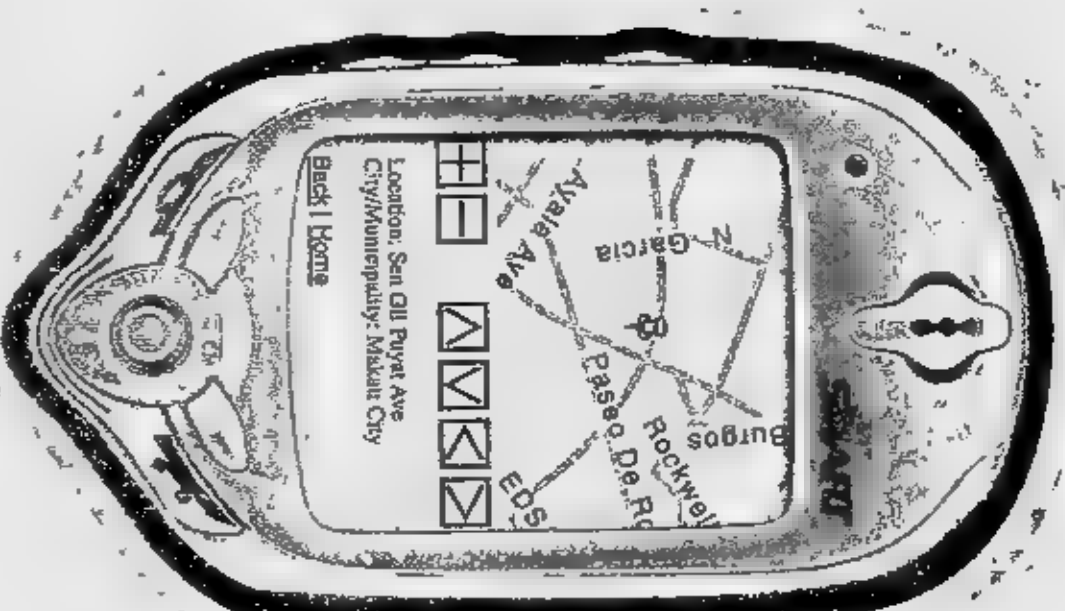
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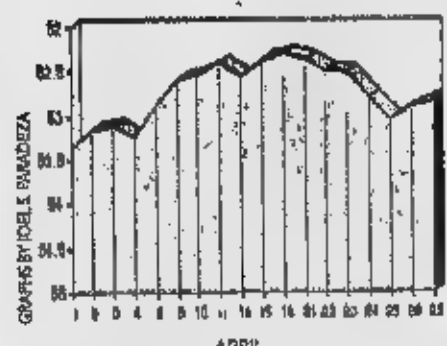
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STOCK MARKET

Stocks snap 5 days of losses

STOCKS snapped a five-day losing streak yesterday after local benchmark treasury bill rates eased and the US market rallied.

But analysts said the gains, led by property developers Ayala Land and SM Prime Holdings, may not be sustained given the lack of fundamental support.

"This is just a technical bounce. We came down to support level and that's where we are coming from," said AB Capital economic analyst Jose Vistan. "Perhaps it would consolidate in the next sessions."

The main index rose 12.08 points or 1.17 percent to 1,048.37 after losing 7.9 percent in the previous five trading days due to concerns about the country's budget deficit and the potential impact of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS).

It is up 2.94 percent since the start of the year.

Turnover slowed to P207.3 million yesterday from Monday's P324.51 million. Gainers beat losers 87 to 14 and 33 stocks were unchanged.

"Previously, market sentiment was optimistic but this was tempered after the Standard & Poor's downgrade. Now we're just waiting for fresh developments," said Vistan, who saw the market moving in a range of 1,030 to 1,080 points.

Leading shopping center developer SM Prime, which accounted for nearly 30 percent of total turnover, rose 2.2 percent or 18 centavos to P4.65.

SM Prime officials said on Monday the group's first-quarter net income likely grew 10 to 12 percent and that it planned to open three malls this year.

Ayala Land, the largest property developer, rose 4.21 percent or 20 centavos to P4.95.

Reuters

No trading on May 2

THERE will be no stock market trading on Friday, May 2, Philippine Stock Exchange president Ernest Leung announced yesterday.

"There's no clearing, so there's no trading," Leung said, noting that the Bangkok Sentral ng Pilipinas had announced that there would be no clearing of checks

on that day. This means that the local stock market will pause for a long weekend starting tomorrow, which is an official non-working holiday to celebrate the International Labor Day.

Trading will resume on Monday (May 5).

By G.H.C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE SARS epidemic is posing not only a serious threat to the country's public health but also to the well-being of its domestic manufacturing industry as China, ground zero of the global SARS epidemic, dumps its excess goods on the Philippines at sharply marked down prices.

Based on his discussions with Divisoria and Bacalaran traders, Manila Rep. Harry Angping reported that there had been a "dramatic" drop in prices of Made-in-China goods over the past few weeks because of the decline in the consumer demand in the Mainland.

Angping said that prices of Chinese imports—from food items to

consumer goods—have fallen by as much as 50 percent. As the SARS outbreak force most Chinese to stay indoors and hold off purchases, Chinese traders have increasingly looked outside their country to offload their excess inventory.

This has prompted Divisoria and Bacalaran traders to increase their orders and offer Filipino

consumers juicier bargains. Angping said this should explain why the crowds at Divisoria and Bacalaran—the country's leading shopping bargain centers—have hardly thinned despite public alarm over the spread of the SARS virus in the country. "The discounts in Divisoria and Bacalaran are just too good to ignore for wholesalers and consumers," Angping said.

But while this could be a boon to consumers, Angping warned that the influx of more Chinese goods at increasingly lower prices would only compound the woes of local industries which have been complaining about the

rampant smuggling and dumping of Chinese goods into the country even before the SARS outbreak.

Angping, who joined a Philippine exhibit in Shanghai last month, said the Department of Trade and Industry and the Bureau of Customs should look into this trend to determine whether it should impose anti-dumping measures on Chinese goods and ensure that all Chinese imports have been assessed properly.

Angping also proposed that the government put Chinese imports under tighter quarantine measures to ensure that the SARS virus were not carried by the Chinese imports.

BIR seen meeting P47-B collection target for April

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue is confident of meeting and even exceeding its P47.423-billion collection target for the month as its intensified tax campaign prompted taxpayers to settle their obligations.

Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho said the BIR and the Bureau of Customs were expected to meet their respective targets for April.

The BIR said that as of last Monday, it had collected about P46 billion.

The internal revenue agency is trying to catch up on its collection to wipe out the P4.7-billion shortfall incurred in the first quarter. The bureau collected P89.9 billion in the first three months against a target of P94.6 billion.

The Customs exceeded its first-quarter goal by 18.6 percent with collections of P26.7 billion.

"The BIR and the Customs have sustained the positive collection trend in April based on preliminary numbers. I hope that their relentless efforts to boost revenue would be sustained in the months ahead," the finance chief said.

Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. said the bureau would meet its P424-billion target for the year as reforms to improve collection and reduce tax evasion continued to bear fruit.

A tax mapping and saturation drive launched last April 2 already brought the BIR team to several key areas in Metro Manila where it found out that 95 percent of business establishments visited committed violations of various forms.



BUSINESS owner Helen Thong sits in her restaurant Taste Good in New York's Chinatown. She says her business has dropped by 50 percent due to fear of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) which is affecting tourism and business in Chinatown.

3 options eyed on Meralco refund

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy has identified three "feasible" methods of implementing the P28-billion refund that the Supreme Court had ordered the Manila Electric Co.

These options include a lump sum payment, conversion into consumer shares of ownership in the company, and credit on future consumption.

Non-government groups Freedom from Debt Coalition (FDC), National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms Inc. (Nascore), and Consumer and Oil Price Watch (COPW) yesterday presented their re-

spective positions on the Meralco refund during a forum at the DOE.

Nascore proposed that Meralco make a lump sum refund for the company's overcharges since 1994 as this would eliminate the added burden on Meralco of making interest payments on top of the overcharges.

According to the group's computations, Meralco's overcharges had now reached P49.7 billion, including compounded interest.

FDC, on the other hand, said the conversion of the refund into consumer shares of ownership would be more appropriate as

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Gov't to seek steady credit rating from Fitch

By Clarissa S. Batino

FINANCE Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said the government would exert all efforts to convince UK-based Fitch Ratings to keep the Philippines' sovereign rating steady at BB plus.

Fitch officials are scheduled to visit Manila next week for a review of the country's ratings.

"We will try our best to convince Fitch that efforts to improve revenues and reform in the fiscal sector are now more sustainable given the improving collections of both the BIR and the Customs," said the finance chief in an interview.

A government source admitted that the risk of a downgrade from

Fitch was greater after Standard & Poor's went ahead and downgraded the country's sovereign rating a notch lower to BB last week.

Camacho said the Macapagal administration would make sure that the economy, particularly the fiscal sector, would continue to shape up.

Unlike S&P that relied largely on numbers in making its decision last week, Fitch would be sending some of its officials to the country to witness ongoing efforts of the government, particularly the Bureau of Internal Revenue, to improve the country's tax take.

In the first quarter, the government's fiscal gap swelled to P58.9 billion, exceeding the ceiling for the period of P55.2 billion, largely on account of

higher-than-programmed expenditures.

Camacho said S&P did not push through with its scheduled annual visit before coming up with "a harsh judgment" on the Philippines' performance. Revenue collection in the first quarter, he pointed out, was more than P6 billion more than the P131-billion target.

"We hope Fitch will be more patient and see first whether we can sustain the improvements we have shown so far. Since they (Fitch officials) are coming over personally, we have a better chance of telling our story," said the finance chief.

Camacho said the BIR would walk Fitch officials through its efforts to improve tax collection and reduce leakage and cheating.

April inflation seen at 2.9-3.1%

THE BANGKO Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday said a stable inflation in April, seen at between 2.9 percent and 3.1 percent, would enable monetary authorities to keep overnight rates steady.

BSP Deputy Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said the central bank's economic research department saw no extraordinary increases in the prices of major commodities in April. Thus, the forecast for the month's inflation was almost unchanged from March.

The inflation rate averaged at 2.9 percent in the first quarter.

"Given our expectations of a 2.9 percent to 3.1 percent inflation in April, the BSP can stay neutral in its monetary policy stance. This level of inflation supports our outlook down the road," said Tetangco.

The central bank had not changed its overnight borrowing rate of 7 percent and overnight lending rate of 9.25 percent since March 2002. It, however, scrapped last March 30 the tiering scheme. Since then, the BSP had been paying a flat 7 percent rate to

overnight bank deposits with the BSP.

Tetangco said the quick resolution of the Middle East conflict would ease the pressure on crude prices and on local consumer prices in the months ahead.

The BSP official said the expected inflation this month was well within the government's target of an average inflation rate of 4.5 percent to 5.5 percent this year.

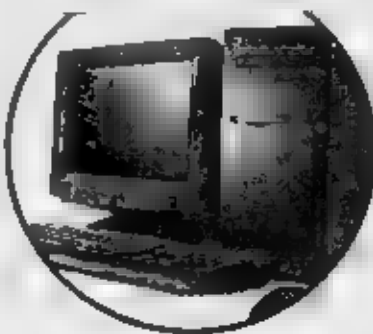
Tetangco said the current overnight rates of the BSP were sufficient in addressing the needs of the economy. He made this statement in reaction to recommendations from global institutions for Asian central banks to consider more cuts in interest rates to strengthen domestic economies.

The BSP had reduced its policy rates by 8 points since it peaked to 15 percent for overnight borrowing and 17.25 percent for overnight lending in 2000.

Reductions in the past, he said, were sufficient for the country to achieve a target of 4.2 percent to 5.2 percent economic growth this year. *Clarissa S. Batino*

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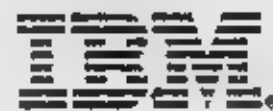
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Bankard moves to expand market share

BANKARD Inc. aims to have 500,000 new credit cards issued in the next five years from the introduction yesterday of a new credit card product designed to pirate holders of non-Bankard cards.

A joint product with JCB International, the leading credit card provider in Japan, the my-Dream JCB Card offers the lowest annual fees and lowest effective revolving interest rate of 2.5 percent per month.

Bankard president and chief executive officer Joven Reyes also said the publicly listed credit card firm posted P17 million in net income in the first quarter of this year, down slightly from year-ago level of P20 million after the firm set aside provisions for probable losses. Last year, Bankard posted a profit of P84 million.

Bankard Inc. presently has 270,000 credit cards in force, of which 50,000 are under the traditional silver and gold JCB brands.

For this year alone, Reyes said the credit card firm was projecting to issue 10,000 to 15,000 myDream credit cards per month or a total of 100,000 for this year. *Elena R. Torrijos*

Meralco board OKs \$600M in new borrowings

By Doris C. Dumlaog

THE BOARD of utility giant Manila Electric Co. has approved up to \$600 million in additional borrowings to refinance debts and cover other funding needs such as capital expenditures and working capital.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, Meralco said its board had approved the "bonded indebtedness" for activities related to its comprehensive liability management plan.

The disclosure said the amount would cover activities such as "the provision of security to Meralco's existing unsecured creditors over assets covered by the mortgage trust indenture (MTI)."

An investment banker explained that Meralco simply approved a plan to raise additional debts and at the same time, authorize the pledge of assets in favor of existing secured creditor covered by the MTI.

MTI, which seeks to maximize the value of a borrower's properties, is an arrangement whereby a mortgagor delivers by way of mortgage a certain property to a trustee bank for the benefit of a group of lenders as collateral for a syndicated loan or bond issue.

Farm groups back GMA policy on biotechnology

INFLUENTIAL members of the agricultural sector have issued a manifesto in support of President Macapagal-Arroyo's approval of the adoption of biotechnology as an anchor of the government's food security program.

In a biotech forum held Monday at the Department of Agriculture, the group also expressed support for Agriculture Secretary Luis Lorenzo Jr.'s call enjoining the agricultural community "to participate in democratic discussions on GMOs, particularly, Bt corn."

Among those who signed the manifesto were Felix Cordero and Rod Bloco of the Nursery Farmers Irrigators Association, the Maratag Farmers Irrigators Association and San Isidro Integrated Agro-Industrial Multipurpose Cooperative (SINAG-MPC), and the Philippine Malze Federation.

Earlier, two of the biggest agricultural groups in Mindanao, the Agricultural and Fisheries Council of General Santos City (AFC) and the Provincial Farmers Action Council in South Cotabato (PPAC), represented by Edwin Paraulman, also expressed their support for the commercialization of biotechnology-processed crops.

Lilia's lament

SEC Chair Lilia Bautista, who normally prefers to suffer in silence over unfavorable media columns/stories, sent over key documents yesterday to correct the spin that appeared in Monday's column and in other papers as well in regard to—how shall we diplomatically put it—the “maverick/menace” dilemma that the Securities and Exchange Commission is now facing.

In brief, Bautista and the three other female SEC commissioners who all now have to answer an irritating anti-graft complaint for the SEC computerization project say both the Department of Budget and Management and the National Computer Center have cleared the P38-million (not P162-million as earlier reported) project.

“We are pleased to note that the outright purchase you have made, as compared with the option of having leased the computer hardware, saved money for the government,” wrote Budget Secretary Emilia Boncodin in their defense.

The local dealer of Sun Microsystems won the January 2002 bidding with a P38-million bid, as against the P62 million submitted by Fujitsu and the P59 million of Pn.BizInfo.

As to the legal question raised by Fr. Joaquin Bernas on the issue of pre-selection of candidates to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the SEC position is that the Securities Regulation Code had effectively amended the Corporation Code in the light of the PSR's self-regulatory status.

In any case, there is a pending court case brought by the camp of Robert Coyiuto Jr. precisely for the judiciary to decide the legality of the pre-selection issue once and for all.

Call collect

IN case you have not noticed it, the local Citibank has shut down its toll free 1-800 line in the United States since April Fools' Day, a service that in the past enabled local credit card holders traveling in the US to talk to a local Citibank officer for any credit card inquiries.

Apparently, the move is part of the cost-cutting measures the profitable American financial giant is undertaking. Besides, the pertinent credit card information like credit balance may now be accessed 24/7 through the Internet.

In case of an emergency like a lost/stolen card, the cardholder may place a collect call to the 24-hour local Citibank line, with the American operator originating the call hopefully managing to navigate through

COCKTALES



Victor C. Agustin

the computerized voice prompts to reach a live person before irritation sets in.

Short takes

• Former Transportation and Communication Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez is taking refresher guitar lessons at the RJ Music School before plunging into the daily campaign grind to reclaim his old congressional seat.

• The Davao Apo View Hotel will likely file a rehabilitation proposal with the local court following the rejection by creditor Banco Filipino of the hotel's debt-to-equity swap proposal.

Heard through the grapevine

THE FATHER and sons Velhagen who used to work for billionaire polo player Albert “Bobby” Aguirre have all signed damaging affidavits against their former principal, with the father, a La Salle classmate of Bobby, executing the statement all the way in Vancouver before a Philippine consular officer.

Former Press Secretary Tomas Gomez III, now based in San Diego, California, as a hotel executive, has also expressed willingness to sign a similar statement.

(Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE					
(As of Tuesday, April 29, 2003)					
STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Banco de Oro Unib. Bank	15.75	16	15.75	15.75	50,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	25.5	26	25.5	26	290,000
China Banking Corp.	660	660	660	660	60
Citibank Savings Bank	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	2,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	23.75	23.75	23.75	23.75	171,500
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	27	27.5	27	27.5	53,100
Philippine National Bank	450	450	450	450	4,130
Rizal Commercial Bank	14	14	14	14	18,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	3,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	17	17	17	17	5,800
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankart Inc.	1.42	1.42	1.42	1.42	670,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1320	1330	1320	1330	1,200
San Life Financial Serv.	1030	1050	1030	1050	3,100
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATIONS					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12	12	11.75	11.75	46
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	11,880
Globe Telecom Inc.	525	535	525	535	35
ISM Communications Corp.	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	1,500
Liberty Telecom Holdings	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	150
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3	3	3	10
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	5,330
Phil. Long Dis. Tel. Co.	375	375	367.5	367.5	14,270
Yankee Corp.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	10,000
Yankee Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	5,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	195,000
Manila Electric Co. B	1.48	1.48	1.47	1.47	547,000
Palayan Corp.	1.9	1.96	1.9	1.96	2,223,000
Trans-Asia Oil & Energy	0.93	0.94	0.93	0.94	250,000
TRANSPORT					
Asian Terminals, Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.48	1.48	5,000
Int'l Container Term. Sys.	2.42	2.42	2.42	2.42	73,500
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.56	2,410,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	17
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	9
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16	16.5	16	16.5	127
La Tondena Distillers, Inc.	32	32	32	32	25
RFM Corp.	0.7	0.7	0.69	0.7	290
San Miguel Corp. A	56.5	56.5	55.5	56	48
San Miguel Corp. B	66	66	65.5	66	12,702
Universal Robina Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	220,000
HOLDINGS					
Ayala Corp.	3.95	4.05	3.95	4	2,844,000
Aboliz Equity Ventures	2.34	2.34	2.3	2.3	55,000
Ay. Nat. Holdings Inc.	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	300,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.49	0.5	0.49	0.5	2,440,000
Alcom Gold Res. Corp.	0.005	0.005	0.005	0.005	1,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	5,000
Benares Holdings Corp.	0.18	0.195	0.18	0.185	8,710,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	100,000
Southeast Asian Cement	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.06	100,000
D.M.C. Holdings Inc.	0.245	0.25	0.245	0.245	1,280,000
First Phil. Holdings Corp.	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.08	370,000
Glester Equities Inc.	0.08	0.0825	0.08	0.0825	300,000
J.G. Summit Holdings, Inc.	1.5	1.54	1.5	1.54	15,000
Manila Steel Corp. Inc. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	1,000,000
Manila Steel Corp. Inc. B	0.58	0.58	0.58	0.58	310,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.18	2,250,000
Muscat Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.32	0.32	370,000
Philinvest Holdings Corp.	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	13,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.033	0.033	0.033	0.033	400,000
Vallex Industries Inc.	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	170,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.35	0.38	0.35	0.38	740,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Matsushita Elec. Phil. Corp.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	73,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	392,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	16.5	16.75	16.5	16.75	85,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	3900	42	36	42	6,540,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	11.75	11.75	11.25	11.25	440,100
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10	10	10	10	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series V	10	10	10	10	8,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series W	10	10	10	10	7,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series X	10	10	10	10	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series Z	10	10	10	10	3,000
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar Unibank	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.95	4,899,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.15	0.16	0.15	0.16	390,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.205	0.21	0.205	0.205	950,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.17	0.175	0.165	0.165	2,560,000
Fluvest Land Inc.	0.87	0.88	0.85	0.85	14,590,000
Koek Phil. Properties	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	200,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	4.6	4.75	4.6	4.65	13,138,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	2,800,000
Atlas Cons. Min. & Dev't	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	3,000
Lapand Cons. Min. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	100,000
Lapand Cons. Min. Co. B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	500,000
Ginco Corp.	0.0042	0.0044	0.0042	0.0044	50,000,000

Interpol Res. 8 0.003 0.0032 0.0032 0.0032 7,000,000
Volcan Inc. 1 0.15 0.15 0.15 0.15 50,000

DISCLOSURES

METRO Pacific Corp. moved its annual stockholders' meeting from June 10 to June 20 with record date on May 15.

BANK of the Philippine Islands declared a special cash dividend of P1 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of May 13 and will be payable on May 28.

ELECTED directors of SM Prime Holdings Inc. are Henry Sy Sr., Jose Cuisia Jr., Sanen Mendiola, Teresita Sy, Henry Sy Jr., Herbert Sy and Hans Sy. The company also declared a regular cash dividend of P0.10 per share and a special cash dividend of P0.025 per share for all stockholders of record as of May 28 and will be payable on or before June 15.

CITY & Land Developers Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 10 with record date on May 11. *Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa.*

CURRENCIES

April 29, 2003	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.910581	1.000000	52.983000
Japan	Yen	0.007561	0.008303	0.439900
United Kingdom	Pound	1.445094	1.588100	84.142300
Hongkong	Dollar	0.116759	0.128225	6.793700
Switzerland	Franc	0.663883	0.729076	38.628600
Canada	Dollar	0.629376	0.691181	36.620800
Singapore	Dollar	0.512138	0.558448	29.795200
Australia	Dollar	0.663757	0.619118	32.802700
Bahrain	Dinar	2.415525	2.652731	140.549600
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.242828	0.266874	14.129200
Brunei	Dollar	0.510701	0.550852	28.715600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000114	0.000600	0.006000
Thailand	Baht	0.023299	0.025450	1.234500
UAE	Dirham	0.247932	0.272279	14.426200
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.098200	58.185900
Argentina	Peso	0.318385	0.349650	18.525500
Brazil	Real	0.304542	0.334448	17.720100
Denmark	Kroner	0.147916	0.161767	8.377000
India	Rupee	0.019272	0.021164	1.121300
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.087826	0.095819	5.110300
Mexico	New Peso	0.506553	0.550852	29.474300
New Zealand	Dollar	0.619118	0.663757	34.802700
Norway	Kroner	0.129008	0.139674	7.306500
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015795	0.017034	0.919000
South Africa	Rand	0.127654	0.140201	7.428300
Korea	Won	0.000746	0.000819	0.043400
Sweden	Kroner	0.092211	0.100619	5.354600
Syria	Pound	0.021681	0.023810	1.261500
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025106	0.027106	1.519000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000571	0.000627	0.033200

INTEREST RATES

April 29, 2003—MARTI Rates	MARTI	SOURCE: MARTI/BLOOMBERG
Interest Rates	29-Apr-03	MARTI
	(%)	28-Apr-03
1 Month	7.8938	8.4135
3 Months	8.2045	8.5031
6 Months	8.9712	9.275
1 Year	9.6731	9.7115
2 Years	10.2981	10.3385
3 Years	11.1658	11.1981
4 Years	11.6961	11.9327
5 Years	11.9582	12.1942
7 Years	12.8271	12.9058
10 Years	13.0646	13.1442
20 Years	13.5673	13.6904
25 Years	14.0846	14.1769

Canadian acquires oil-drilling firm

By Doris C. Dumlaog

CANADA-BASED Tracer Petroleum Corp. is set to acquire a controlling stake in Forum Exploration Inc., a subsidiary of publicly listed Forum Pacific Inc., through a share-swap deal worth about \$10 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, FPI said it had approved the purchase by the Canadian oil firm of 125 million shares in its subsidiary.

This translates to the takeover of about 66 percent interest in Forum Exploration in exchange for 100 million Tracer shares at a deemed value of \$0.10 per share. Forum Pacific will keep the remaining 34 percent in the subsidiary.

The exploration unit has full control of two contract areas in the Philippines, including the Geophysical Survey and Exploration Contract (GSEC) which covers Manila Bay and a portion of the contiguous landward area of Luzon Island, including most of the area of Metro Manila.

3 options eyed ...

From page B1

Meralco was currently not in a financial position to make a full P28-billion refund.

"Converting the amount into shares will not involve any cash outlay for the company. The P28-billion worth of stocks can be sourced from Meralco's unappropriated and appropriated retained earnings amounting to P27.9 billion and the asset appraisal increment of P25.6 billion," the group said in its position paper.

COPW chair Raul Concepcion, on the other hand, suggested an immediate refund for customers consuming 300 kilowatts per hour of electricity or less per month as this segment represented about 77 percent of the company's customer base and 18 percent of total energy sales.

This GSEC expired in 2000 but Forum has recently applied for another GSEC area which includes the Manila Bay area previously covered, plus an additional area on land in a strip extending northward from the bay and beyond Lingayen Gulf.

The second contract area is known as SC 40, which covers the northern half of Cebu Island plus part of the Visayan Sea offshore to the west of the island.

Several exploration prospects and leads have been identified by Forum within the service contract area, both onshore Cebu, and offshore in the Visayan Sea. A small gas field has been discovered and appraised in onshore Cebu.

Based on an evaluation by PGS Reservoir Consultants (UK) Ltd., an independent consultancy specializing in petroleum reservoir evaluation and economic analysis, there was an expected value of net cash flow of \$51.23 million for the interests and an optimistic value of net cash flow of \$485 million.

For those consuming more than 300 kWh of electricity a month, "a compromise settlement that would have the least impact on the financial viability of Meralco" should be forged.

Bagong Alyansang Makabayan spokesperson Renato Reyes agreed with Concepcion and said an immediate refund should first be given to the residential customers before talking about stock options and refunds for the bigger consumers.

Credit on future consumption was also suggested during the forum, which will mean a rate reduction on monthly consumption equivalent to the same amount that a consumer should get in refunds.

The DOE is set to submit its position on the Meralco refund to the Energy Regulatory Commission in two weeks.



Country Bankers Life Insurance Corporation

Wishes to inform its **stakeholders** of the newly elected directors during its Annual Stockholders Meeting held at its principal office at the Country Bankers Centre located at 648 T.M. Kalaw St., Manila, to wit:

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Consunji, David M.
Desiderio, Caridad S.
Desiderio, Gloria G.
Dolor, Soledad L.
Guingona, Ma. Victoria G.
Locsin, Dennis H.
Macrohon, Ignacio Jr. A.
Montelibano, Roberto L.
Montelibano, Rodolfo L.
Muñoz, Agnes D.
Naguat, Antolin T.
Petines, Romulo A.
Reyes, Juan Miguel Procopio S.
Valdez, Remedios V.
Velasquez, Romeo G.

And in its organizational meeting held immediately thereafter, the following Executive Officers were duly elected:

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Chairman Roberto L. Montelibano
Vice-Chairwoman Ma. Victoria G. Guingona
President Ignacio A. Macrohon, Jr.
Executive Vice-President Agnes D. Muñoz
Vice-President, Operations Dolly R. Mari
Treasurer Antolin T. Naguiat
Corporate Secretary Romeo G. Velasquez

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Country Bankers Insurance Corporation

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Muñoz, Agnes D.
Naguat, Antolin T.
Naguat, Carmelo T.
Petines, Romulo A.
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President Ignacio A. Macrohon, Jr.
Executive Vice-President Agnes D. Muñoz
Treasurer Antolin T. Naguiat
Senior Vice-President & General Manager Servillano C. Mendoza
First Vice-President Romeo G. Velasquez
Corporate Secretary Rizal Antonio D. Meru

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Banco Filipino disputes charges

By Elena R. Torrijos

BANCO Filipino yesterday refuted allegations that the bank engaged in a common pattern of extending loans to borrower firms controlled by bank vice chair Albert Aguirre.

The INQUIRER reported Tuesday that the sister of Aguirre filed a complaint with the Monetary Board, the policy-making body of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, asking that the monetary authority place the thrift bank's board under investigation and preventive suspension for alleged unsound banking practices that violated the country's banking laws.

In a letter to the INQUIRER, Banco Filipino executive vice president and corporate secretary Francisco Rivera pointed out that Aguirre was neither a stockholder nor a director or officer of nine borrower-firms which got P1.6 billion from Banco Filipino.

In the complaint filed on behalf of clients Anna Maria Aguirre-Koruga and Christopher Koruga, lawyer Jose Bernas said the nine firms were controlled indirectly by

Aguirre through close associates, friends and their relatives.

Banco Filipino maintained that the P1.6 billion in loans granted to the nine firms were "in accordance with existing laws, rules and regulations and the tenets of sound banking practices."

Rivera also claimed that the bank's loans were fully secured with real estate and were appraised by duly licensed and independent appraisers.

He said the Las Piñas property cited in the complaint of having a value of only P15,000 per sq. m. was in fact a commercial property the adjoining lots of which were reportedly sold by their owners at P50,000 to P60,000 per sq. m.

Also, of the nine loans, only six were actually extended and out of the six, five have been fully paid, he said. "The remaining loan is in the process of liquidation."

Also, Rivera claimed that the officers who had executed affidavits on alleged borrowing schemes of Banco Filipino were "former officers of some of the borrowing companies who were fired from their positions for dishonesty."

SM Prime keen on Fort Boni property

PUBLICLY listed SM Prime Holdings of retail magnate Henry Sy is eyeing a property owned by the state-owned Bases Conversion and Development Authority in Fort Bonifacio for a mall development project.

In an interview yesterday, SM Prime executive vice president Henry Sy Jr. said that SM Prime was waiting for the BCDA to issue the terms of reference for the sale or lease of that property in Fort Bonifacio.

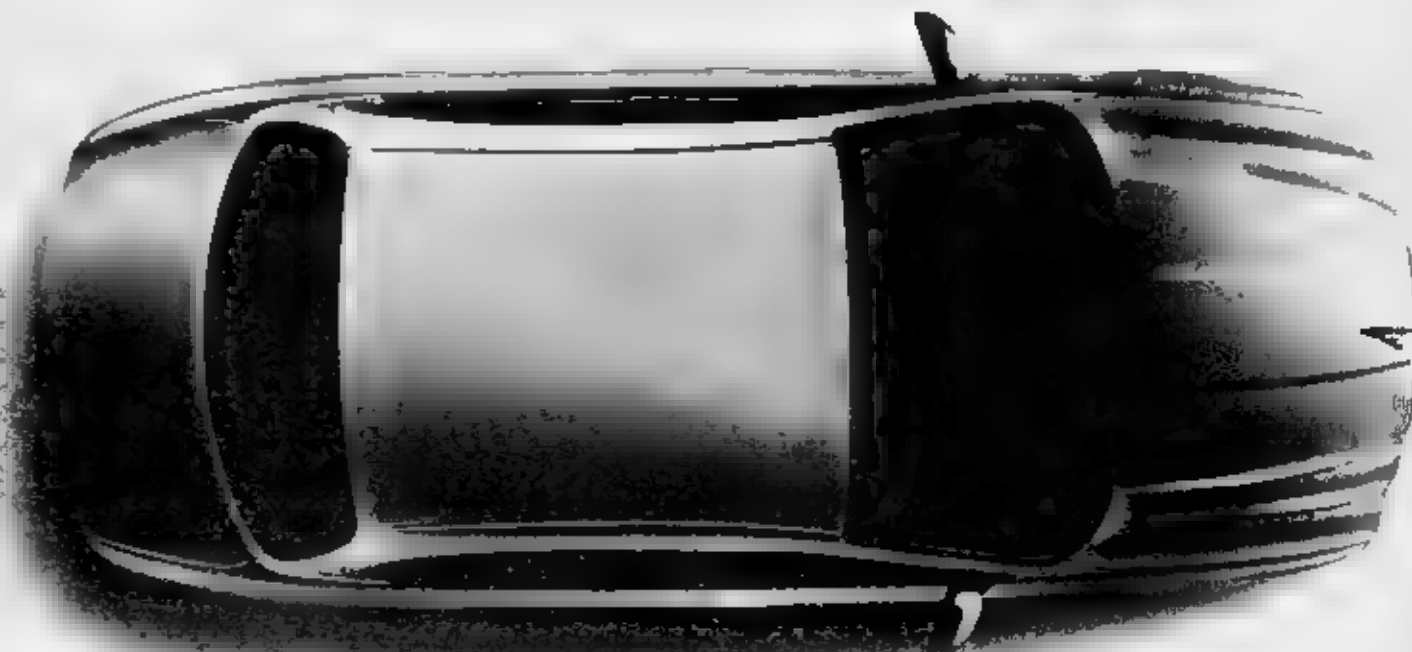
Typically, Sy said, SM Prime needed five to ten hectares of land

for a mall. "Fortunately, BCDA has a property suited for this purpose."

"We hope the BCDA will let people bid (for its pieces of property in Fort Bonifacio)," he said.

Sy said SM Prime neither had approached nor had been approached by Fort Bonifacio Development Corp., now largely owned by the Ayala and Campos groups, for any property sale.

The Ayala group itself, through its Ayala Land Inc., is a competitor of SM Prime in the field of mall development and operation in key cities nationwide. *Elena R. Torrijos*



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X-TYPE

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Jaguar Ortigas: 88 ADB Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City, Tel. 633-0185, E-mail. sales@jaguar.com.ph
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ATTENTION

MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERS AND PRIVATE EMISSION TESTING CENTER (PETC) OPERATORS

Pursuant to Republic Act 8749 (The Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999) and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR), a motor vehicle should first be tested for smoke emission at a Private Emission Testing Center (PETC) authorized by the Land Transportation Office (LTO) before it can be registered. An emission certificate, called Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC), is issued to the motor vehicle that passed the emission test.


The problem is some emission certificates are either fake or unauthorized.

To stop the issuance of fake/unauthorized emission certificates, the LTO, pursuant to the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) Order No. 2002-31 (Authorization of Private Emission Testing Centers), issued a Memorandum dated September 10, 2002 (Procedure for Authorization of Private Emission Testing Center), directing all PETCs to comply with the requirements therein, more specifically stated under Section 2.4 to wit:

"Employment of an IT based data storing, retrieval system, which is capable of delivering a nationwide real time information and/or all other data that may be required by either DOTC or LTO."

On February 17, 2003, the LTO issued Memorandum Circular (MC) No. RTL-MC-03429 (Mandatory Validation of Emission Testing Results in the LTO-IT Project's System). The MC directs all duly accredited and authorized PETCs to ensure that all emission test results that they issue are officially registered and verified online, in real time through a facility that is integrated with the Motor Vehicle Registration System (MVRS) workflow of the LTO and its offices nationwide, through the LTO-Information Technology (LTO-IT) Project proponent.

The MC also directs that all PETC applications for LTO authorization shall not be accepted without the required system integration with the LTO-IT Project.


REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION & COMMUNICATIONS
LAND TRANSPORTATION OFFICE
East Avenue, Quezon City
E-mail Address: lto@dotc.gov.ph • Website: www.lto.gov.ph

LTO RECEIVED
BY
DATE
TIME
OFFICE

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. RTL-MC-03429
February 17, 2003

TO: (a) All Private Emission Testing Centers and All Others Concerned, and;
(b) All Regional Directors, Assistant Regional Directors, Transportation District Officers, and Other Employees Concerned, This Office

SUBJECT: Mandatory Validation of Emission Testing Results in the LTO-IT Project's System

WHEREAS, pursuant to DOTC Department Order No. 2002-31, the LTO issued the Memorandum dated September 10, 2002, directing compliance by all Private Emission Testing Centers (PETCs) with the stated requirements. More specifically, Section 2.4 of the subject Memorandum requires, to quote:

"Employment of an IT based data storing, retrieval system, which is capable of delivering a nationwide real time information and/or all other data that may be required by either DOTC or LTO".

WHEREAS, LTO has undertaken and continues to implement the comprehensive modernization and computerization of its systems or business processes by virtue of the LTO Information Technology (IT) Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, in view of the foregoing, all duly accredited and authorized PETCs and all LTO officials and employees are hereby directed to comply with the following:

- Effective immediately, duly accredited and authorized PETCs shall ensure that all emission test results issued are registered and verified in real time under a system integrated with the Motor Vehicle Registration System (MVRS) workflow of LTO and its offices nationwide, through the LTO-IT Project Proponent - Stradcom Corporation.
- Effective February 27, 2003, all applications for LTO authorization shall not be accepted without the required system integration with the LTO-IT Project.

3. Commencing on March 10, 2003, LTO officials and employees in the National Capital Region, Regions 3 and 4 shall start accepting emission test results that can be verified and authenticated in real time / on-line under the LTO-IT Project, in compliance with the subject Memorandum.

4. Commencing on May 5, 2003, all LTO officials and employees shall strictly accept only emission test results that are verified and authenticated in real time / on-line under the LTO-IT Project.

5. Since the real time PETC validation work was integrated with the MVRS of the LTO-IT Project shall confirm and secure the authenticity of the emission test results, all LTO personnel are also directed to accept any Certificate of Emission Compliance (CEC) form from the Department of Trade and Industry Accredited and DOTC/LTO Authorized PETCs, provided it has the following information as mandated by Section 12 of the DOTC-DOTC Joint Administrative Order No. 1, series of 2001:

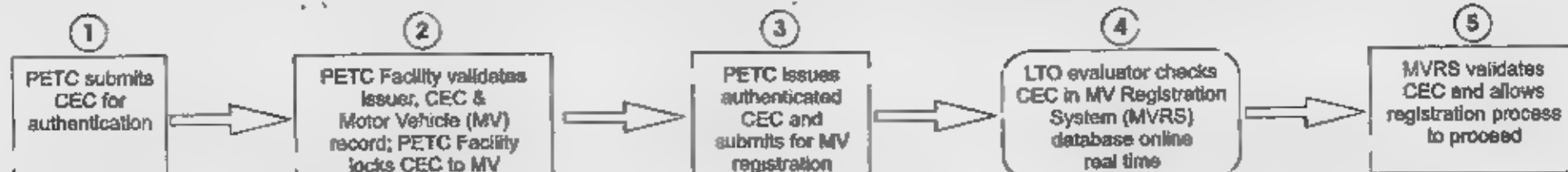
- Title (e.g. "Test Report" or "Test Certificate");
- Name and address of the Center;
- Unique number of the test report or certificate;
- Name and address of the client;
- Identification of the test method used;
- Description, condition, and ambiguous identification of the vehicle tested;
- Date of test;
- Test results with the units of measures of actual test as compared to standard;
- Name(s), function(s), and signature(s) or equivalent identification of the person(s) authorizing the test report, and;
- Statement to the effect that the results relate only to the items tested

LTO Memorandum Circular No. RTL-MC-03413, as amended, and all other previous issuances of LTO insofar as they are inconsistent with the provisions of the Memorandum Circular, are hereby rescinded accordingly.

For your strict compliance.


ROBERTO F. LIMOSNO
Assistant Secretary

LTO-IT PETC Facility



This facility is fully automated and ensures only one CEC for each vehicle registered thus eliminating fake/unauthorized CECs.

Starting MAY 5, 2003, the LTO will strictly accept only emission certificates that can be verified and authenticated online, in real time, through the LTO-IT System.

Avoid inconvenience when you register your motor vehicle. Make sure that your emission certificates are officially authenticated by the LTO-IT System. For your protection and peace of mind, your motor vehicle should be tested at the following PETCs linked to the LTO-IT System:

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| 1. ABS Motor Vehicle Emission Testing and Car Care Center Co.
885 Quirino Highway Cor. Urbino St. Baguio, Q.C.
Tel No. 821-7817 | 18. GOLDMEMBER Emission Testing Center, Inc.
Tanzang Luma, Ilocos, Cavite
Mobile No. 0916-5773252 | 9. AM Pacdo Enterprise Inc.
105 A. Tucson New Marikina Subd. Sta. Elona, Marikina City
Tel No. 044-483-8390 | 8. Ramalpa Emission Test Co.
Abner St. East, Lungsod West, Urdaneta, Pangasinan
Mobile No. 0916-4592388 |
| 2. Automall Philippines Corporation
2280 Pasong Tamo Ext., Makati City
Tel No. 892-4757 | 16. Lucena Grand Service Station Emission
Bayang Dupay, Christian Rd., Lucena City
Tel No. 042-373-8460 | 10. Health Conscious Management & General Services
52-D Sto. Domingo cor. Ruffo St., Quezon City
Tel No. 044-800-3983 | 9. Malcor Emission Center Co.
409 MacArthur Highway, Valenzuela
Tel No. 02-839-4484 |
| 3. Extramile Tire and Car Care Center, Inc.
Extramile Bldg. Commonwealth, Q.C.
Tel No. 892-9028 to 29 | 17. EL CLARE Emission Testing Center
Rosa Parks Co. Sto. Domingo
Tel No. 245-0323 | 11. Primero Emission Testing Center
Lachica St. Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
Mobile No. 0918-2255447 | 10. Maple Emission Test Center
Bk. + Lot 7 & 8, Soddier's Hills, Bgy. Putatan, Muntinlupa
Tel No. 839-4484 |
| 4. KGM Emission Testing Center
Navotas Freeport Complex, N. Bay Blvd., Navotas, M.M.
Tel No. 288-5798 | 18. TransTech Emission Testing and Services Center Co.
Kumintang Bldg. Pasig City
Tel No. 0431-723-4436 | 12. Pangasinan Emission Testing Center
Anold Mangaldan, Pangasinan
Tel No. 043-2255447 | 11. Maple Emission Testing Center
Taguig
Tel No. 839-4484 |
| 5. Mancor Industries Inc.
42 E. Rodriguez Ave. Q.C.
Tel No. 123-3028 | 19. W-RED Emission Testing Center
Ravara Subd. Brgy. Real 1, Bacoor, Cavite
Tel No. 372-2778, 413-01005 | 13. JOC Smoke Emission Testing Center
Cassington Court, Dagupan City
Tel No. 044-483-8390 | 12. Enter Emission Test Center Co.
MacArthur Highway, Marikina City, Taguig
Mobile No. 0918-5052442 |
| 6. Refuels Enterprise
Gov. Pascual Malabon, M.M.
Tel No. 447-7831 | 20. Labag Emission Testing Center
National Highway, Apogong Gen. Santos City, South Cotabato | 14. RDM Emission Testing Center
RDM Mojaster Center, Service Station, Tuguegarao City
Tel No. 0781-844-1930 | 13. Enter Emission Test Center Co.
MacArthur Highway, Marikina City, Taguig
Mobile No. 0918-5052442 |
| 7. Techno Equipment Sales and Services, Inc.
1329 Diokno St. Sta. Cruz, Manila
Tel No. 433-0841 | | 15. Freeway Motor Sales Inc.
Donna Patricia, Tarcen Highway, Bulacan
Tel No. 044-483-8390 | 14. Devite Emission Test Center
Perpetual Heights, Agaña, San Simon, Pangasinan
Mobile No. 0916-4592388 |
| 8. GHQ Emission Testing Center Inc.
16th St. cor. 505 Quirino Avenue
Tel No. 892-4757 | | 16. X-Zone Private Emission Testing
Dang Sari, Maharlika Highway, Calabarzon City
Tel No. 044-800-3983 | 15. Devite Emission Test Center
Perpetual Heights, Agaña, San Simon, Pangasinan
Mobile No. 0916-4592388 |
| 9. WSSB Emission Testing Center
Ungko, San Rafael, Bulacan
Tel No. 044-855-0547 | | 17. Bagmet Emission Testing Center
Tingla, Labac, Baguio City
Tel No. 0431-723-4436 | 16. Devite Emission Test Center
Perpetual Heights, Agaña, San Simon, Pangasinan
Mobile No. 0916-4592388 |
| 10. MBSR Emission Testing Center
Tenejero, Balanga City
Mobile No. 0917-5171625 | | | 17. Avasa Emission Test Center Co.
5 East Quirino St. Sta. Roque, Angono, Rizal
Mobile No. 0918-5052442 |
| 11. DMH Automotive Systems
Gov. F. Hodi Ave. Baguio, Sta. Maria, Marikina
Tel No. 044-841-1567 | | | 18. Pura Emission Test Center
Bgy. Damtelan, Bataan, Bataan
Tel No. 0431-723-4436 |
| 12. RBL Emission Testing Center
DRF Highway, Urdaneta, San Rafael, Bulacan
Mobile No. 0917-5171625 | | | 19. Pura Emission Test Center
Bataan, Bataan
Tel No. 0431-723-4436 |
| 13. Vehicle Inspection and Testing Corporation
Bldg. 15 BRP Area, Subic Bay Freeport Zone Authority
Tel No. 0471-232-30 2 | | | 20. Pura Emission Test Center
San Jose, Marikina
Tel No. 0431-723-4436 |
| 14. W-Prest House Emission Testing Center
MacArthur Highway, San Jose, Marikina, Bulacan
Tel No. 44-800-3983 | | | 21. Alcor Emission Test Center
Bgy. Marikina, Los Angeles
Mobile No. 0918-5052442 |
| | | | 22. Upland Emission Test Center
Marikina St. Bgy. Marikina, Marikina City, Taguig
Mobile No. 0918-5052442 |
| | | | 23. Luflex, Inc.
Rizal Ave. Bgy. San Jose, Taguig, Rizal
Tel No. 866-8668 |

PROMOTE A POLLUTION-FREE ENVIRONMENT. STOP THE ISSUANCE OF FAKE AND UNAUTHORIZED EMISSION CERTIFICATES.

PETC HOTLINES: 922-0301 LOCALS 307, 315, 341, 342 & 372

Congress wants AUV tax perks to remain

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

SENATORS are threatening to stall the passage of the proposed reforms in automotive taxes unless the government agrees to maintain the tax incentives granted to Asian utility vehicles.

In a statement, Sen. Sergio Osmeña III, chair of the committee on banks and financial institutions, said AUVs worth up to P700,000 should retain their tax-exempt status because they have the highest local content among vehicle models (at least 40 percent) that would benefit local automotive parts makers.

AUVs are currently exempted from excise taxes because they have a seating capacity for at least 10 people. However, if the automotive tax reforms were passed in Congress, the AUVs would pay an average of 15 percent excise tax, which would push their sticker price closer to P1 million or beyond the reach of the target market.

In the face of vigorous opposition by Osmeña and other senators, the approval of the state-backed Senate Bill No. 2157 is likely to take longer than expected which could force the government to withdraw the automotive tax reforms.



Citystate Savings Bank, Inc.
709 Shaw Blvd., Pasig City

Statement of Condition As of March 26, 2003

ASSETS	AMOUNT	THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS:
Cash & Cash Equivalents	P 23,708,004.94	Vicente M. Santiago, Jr. Chairman
Due From Banks	15,125,740.00	Alfonso G. Sly Vice Chairman
Due From Other Banks	30,524,740.14	Antonio L. Cabangan-Gloria Director
Interbank Loans Receivable	300,000,000.00	D. Alfred A. Cabangan Director
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	420,332,447.77	Leone Eilat Pelt Director
Available for Sale Securities	162,000,000.00	Leone Tse Wen Director
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	13,028,884.00	Feodor M. Soto Director
Equity Investment in Financial Allied	302,500.00	J. Wilfredo A. Cabangan Director
Underwriting	981,378,878.16	D. Arnold A. Cabangan Director
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	49,417,061.80	Godofredo C. Uy-Ticoa Director
Other Assets (Net)	70,368,194.07	Armando G. Trinidad Director
Property Owned/Leased	70,368,194.07	Benjamin V. Ramos Director
Others	70,368,194.07	Anthony Tan Director
TOTAL ASSETS	P 1,204,084,181.55	Dr. Ramon L. Sile Director
LIABILITIES	AMOUNT	Atty. Joaquin T. Verus, Jr. Director, Corporate Secretary
Demand Deposits	P 91,064,782.52	PRINCIPAL OFFICERS:
Savings Deposits	627,988,694.98	D. Alfred A. Cabangan President
Time Deposits	400,282.31	Atty. Ray D. Delin Executive Vice President
Due to BSP	18,110,447.85	
Accounts Payable	7,643,381.09	
Accrued Interest, Taxes & Other Expenses Payable	80,161.53	
Unearned Income & Other Deferred Credits	5,300,870.72	
Other Liabilities	5,300,870.72	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	P 714,418,821.16	
CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	AMOUNT	
Capital Stock	P 441,000,000.00	
Paid-in Surplus	2,222,444.00	
Surplus Free	41,573,820.74	
Undivided Profits	4,977,268.53	
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	P 489,773,343.27	
TOTAL LIABILITIES & CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	AMOUNT	
	P 1,204,084,181.55	
CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS:	AMOUNT	
Items Held For Sale/Leasing	P 2,814.00	
Items Held As Collateral	505.00	
Loan Deposits / Payments Received	42,353.10	
Delinquency Claims Receivable	1,434,383.42	
Outstanding Sales for Collections	95,458.99	
Other Guarantees Issued - Others	1,234,080.00	
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	P 2,912,213.51	
COMPLIANCE WITH MAGNA CARTA LAW:	AMOUNT	
Prescribed Ratio of Compliance	2% For Small	
Actual Compliance	100.00%	
OTHER INFORMATION: (CB Circular 2003)		
Non-performing loans and Ratio to total loan portfolio	P 20,320,504.54	
Classified loans and other risk assets	3.93%	
General loan loss reserve	P 23,370,804.54	
Specific loan loss reserve	P 1,022,345.69	
Return on equity (ROE)	P 11,540,838.33	
DOSR loans/advances	5.35%	
Ratio to total loan portfolio and Past due DOSR loans/advances and ratio to total portfolio	10,082,105.56	
	1.35%	
	NIL	
REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES		
PASIG CITY		
We, Eduardo O. Olaveria and D. Alfred A. Cabangan, solemnly swear that all contents set forth in this report are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.		
(Sgd.) EDUARDO O. OLIVERIA	(Sgd.) D. ALFRED A. CABANGON	
VP - Controller	President	
SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 26th day of April, 2003, at Pasig City, Philippines, in the presence of the undersigned, a Notary Public, who being duly sworn, depose and say that the contents of the foregoing report are true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief.		
TEODORO D. VILLARMA, JR. NOTARY PUBLIC, UNTIL DEC. 31, 2003, PRR NO. 1301462		
Doc No. 10, Page No. 4, Book No. 11, Series of 2003		

To Our Valued Patients, Clients and the General Public.

ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED takes the utmost exceptions to the allegations aired against us over the ABS-CBN Channel 2's 14 minutes TV Program MISSION X shown last Tuesday, April 22, 2003 at 11 30 P.M.

We unconditionally warrant that these allegations are totally baseless and the concerned television program has only been misled by disgruntled former employee or employees of GOLDQUEST BIOTECHNOLOGIES, INCORPORATED motivated by malice.

The roving crew and cameraman of MISSION X entered the premises of ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, ROOM 205 at 11 00 a.m. of April 21, 2003 without any appointment and started taking footages without any permission. What MISSION X claimed was proof of the purchase of expired chemical reagents was a green plastic bag which contains 4 packs of properly sealed EDTA (ETHYLENE DIAMINE TETRA ACETATE) vacuum tubes bearing the expiration dates of October 2004 (1 pack) and November 2004 (3 packs). Definitely they are not chemical reagents. The roving crew and cameraman did not bother to examine the contents of this plastic bag. After taking the footages, the roving crew asked the manager of ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED for her comments. She properly declined as she did not know the reason for their video coverage. We deeply regret that MISSION X showed footages without giving us the opportunity to refute the unfounded and malicious charges against us.

In its 33 years of exemplary and dedicated service as well as its concern for HUMAN HEALTH, ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED has NEVER engaged itself in the purchase of "expired chemical reagents" as alleged by MISSION X. 100% of the chemical reagents used in our laboratories are purchased from reputable multinational companies: ABBOTT LABORATORIES PHILIPPINES, ROCHE PHILIPPINES, BIOCARE HEALTH RESOURCES, CYBERTEC CORPORATION, MARSMAN DRYSDALE MEDICAL PRODUCTS. We assure our valued patients, clients and the general public that the chemical reagents we purchase have passed the strict measures and requirements of QUALITY CONTROL of the BUREAU OF FOOD AND DRUGS (BFAD) and the BUREAU OF HEALTH FACILITIES AND SERVICES (BHFS) in the Department of Health.

What MISSION X did unfairly damaged the reputation of innocent people in LABORATORY MEDICINE.

MISSION X owes the public an apology

To Our Valued Patients, Clients and the General Public,

THANK YOU for your utmost understanding.

THANK YOU for believing in our goals and our mission in Laboratory Medicine.

THANK YOU for your steadfast support and for your believing that ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED has never been and will NEVER be engaged in acts which are contrary to law and the standards of Laboratory Medicine.

THE PATHOLOGIST, MANAGEMENT, AND STAFF OF ASIATIC MEDICAL LABORATORIES, INCORPORATED

PAID ADVT

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Your class.

Your moves.

Your tendencies.

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PEOPLE at WORK

Editor Raul O. Marcelo • Subsection Editor Regina Galang Reyes

Former nun helps people discern their 'calling'

By Cade G. Garcia

THELMA Geraldine A. Baricaua was a nun for almost two decades. But a heart condition led her to leave her religious calling and instead help people discern theirs by providing career development consultancy services.

Baricaua is a senior consultant of Career Systems, Inc. (CSI), a consultancy company specializing in career development. She has been with CSI for 20 years, having joined it in 1983 when it was first founded by Josie Santamaria. She and Santamaria were pioneers, good friends who shared the same interests and a common career.

The two thought of themselves as trailblazers because they were starting something that was mostly about human resources. In 1977, they founded the Career Development Association of the Philippines, of which she's past president. Career development was a new field. "It was exciting. But we knew it would be hard. We knew we would meet resistance in selling the idea," says Baricaua.

Credentials

The veteran consultant holds a degree in AB Philosophy from St. Louis University and an MA in Guidance and Counseling, major

in Career Development from De La Salle University, and is presently working on a doctoral program in Personnel and Human Resources Management at the University of Sto. Tomas. "I believed the best way to establish myself was to have credentials," says Baricaua, whose involvement in career development goes back to the days when she was a nun and served as assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts, and as guidance director of St. Paul's College, Q.C.

She was 17 and in 3rd year college when Baricaua entered the convent and stayed for 19 years. Those were happy fulfilling years, up until the time she developed a heart condition, which according to her, came about when she started feeling burnt-out. She had been helping relocate some 200 families from a sugar plantation in Dumaguete.

The transition from the structured environment of the religious order to life outside could have been more difficult for Baricaua. There is no question that people undergo change or transition. Changing careers is not an uncommon

dilemma. Baricaua applied the principles of career development in her life and saw its benefits, which eased the transition.

Career development

Fortunately for other professionals, career development has gained wider acceptance. "We started by propagating the concept

in schools since students were already familiar with career guidance. We organized yearly con-

ferences for guidance counselors nationwide," says Baricaua.

Her mission, Baricaua points out, is to help people discern their calling and to assist them in planning their careers. "They come to us because they feel they have to be sure they're on the right career path. They undergo a process wherein we explore their needs, motivations, internal barriers, and personality types. An honest counselor can pinpoint areas of growth, and an honest assessment can give the client more self-awareness," she explains. Ideally, this scientific method is combined with spiritual discern-

ment. "When the client is confused, I bring in the spiritual dimension," claims Baricaua.

It's essential for the consultant or counselor to have good diagnostic or analytical skills. "He must be persuasive because he should be able to convince the client of what is best for him," says the consultant, adding that a consultant is supposed to be there for keeps. "He must have a long-term commitment to the client and should be a part of his history," she says.

Spiritual foundation

When feeling lost, Baricaua turns to her faith, to her spirituality, which is clearly the underpinning of her existence, keeping her above the fray of everyday life. Purposeful and determined, she says she has always been service-oriented and that service has always been a primary motivation. In a way, she carries this out more tangibly by devoting part of her time to a group which she helped organized back in 1988—the Vocation Affirmation Program. She recounts, "When I was in the convent, I realized that nuns and priests are particularly vulnerable to midlife crisis. We help them deal with it by way of this group."

At the moment, Baricaua surrounds herself with simple joys.



BARICAUA

PHOTO BY JESS YUSON

"I'm happy whenever I help someone get over a crisis, when someone confused is enlightened and when I can help them shape their future." Perhaps because of her calling, her sense of service, Baricaua sees and defines happiness only in these terms. In the same token, she believes success means combining job and mission, and being good at both.

As far as everything goes, Baricaua has no regrets. "Being a nun was a phase in my life," she remarks. "This is another phase."

When she decided to follow a different path, it did not mean that she had changed as a person. Deep down, she is the same. Her purpose and her mission remain the same. Perhaps at heart, she is still a nun. Baricaua explains, "It was merely a change of garb."

(Listen to Ms. Baricaua share her experiences on career development in People at Work Live! Seminar Series on Career Development Strategies on May 27, 28, and 29. For more information, call 897 8808 local 554.)

'I want to work in HR'

By Tita Datu Puangco

I'VE been doing administrative functions for the past ten years, such as recruitment of personnel administration, maintenance of plant and equipment, and purchasing. Having been exposed to human resource (HR) functions such as recruitment, I have come to realize that an HR job is what I really want. Interviewing, screening, and conducting training and seminars really fascinate me. I really desire to shift to HR. However, there is a very slim chance for me to get into HR in my present job since our company has limited need for HR staff. Our company is also presently downsizing.

I have been applying with other companies but since my exposure is in the administration function, I cannot convince them that, although I have limited experience in HR, given the chance, I can do the HR job well. Also, most companies are looking for graduates of psychology, human behavior or or-

ganizational development for their HR people.

I am a communication arts graduate with MBA and I have attended training programs and seminars concerning HR, such as recruitment, conducting performance appraisal, and labor relations. How can I go to HR? Do you think it is not too late for me to shift in HR, as I am already in my 30s? Please help me. Thank you and God bless!

HR Aspirant

If you look at the background of successful human resource practitioners in the roster of the Personnel Management Association of the Philippines, the premier HR organization today, you will notice a great variety of backgrounds in terms of the starting point of their careers. Practitioners come from law, administration, accountancy, communications, production, etc. Typically, of course, because of the need for deep understanding of human behavior required of the job, those with background in psychology and other

Advice

FOR THE ANXIOUS PERSON AT WORK

human behavioral backgrounds are preferred.

Assets

Your solid administration background can in fact be an asset. You have a communications background. I have a similar background. My original degree was in journalism. If you will review your course, you will note that you have considerable units in human and audience behavior. These courses have given you also a deep understanding of the human factor. So, be confident that you in fact possess the knowledge needed to handle a human resource job.

Then, take a look at the way you write your resume. Does it pigeon hole you because it focuses on your administration competencies? Why not highlight the time and energy you

devote to recruitment and training, as well as on the additional courses you have taken? You know the art of interviewing. Simulate with a friend and learn how you can highlight your strengths and neutralize your weaknesses.

Techniques

At 30, you have the right level of maturity to pursue the job. The challenge may not be in terms of age or background. You may not be using the proper techniques to land a human resource job. Let me share with you some techniques. First, inquire from your friends and relatives if they know of vacancies in their place of work.

Two, join professional organizations of human resource practitioners. You can join PMA or the other more specialized field like the Organization Development Professionals Network, and the others in training, compensation or labor relations. This allows you to upgrade your know-how. At the same time the power is in the network of people who can provide you leads. Watch also the Work-



ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Force television program on RPN that I host every Sunday or read PDI's Job Market or listen to People at Work on DZRH. All these resources provide you information on jobs. Then, writing this letter may just interest a reader whose company wants to give you a break. Take care and God bless!

(Ms. Puangco is CEO and president of Ancilla Enterprise Development Consulting. Send comments, feedback or requests for advice through email and send to advice@ancillaedc.com.ph or fax to 892-2902)



Are you stuck in an electronic traffic jam?

DEAR WW: Last week, I received over 300 email messages! I complained to my boss, who promptly told me to come up with recommendations to reduce the number of emails sent within our company. I don't have a clue as to what we can do about it.

Stuck In An Electronic Traffic Jam

Your letter reminded me of an old friend's Vietnam War story. When his base became the target of a mortar attack, there were, thankfully, few casualties. But one thing that took a direct hit was the compressor of the officers' club refrigerator. Well, the enlisted men thought they're prayers had been answered: at dinner that night their plates were loaded with lobster. The next morning, lobster was nesting amidst their powdered eggs.

The situation began to seem less sublime, however, when

lobster showed up again at lunch...and then again at dinner...and then regularly on the menu for the better part of a week. My friend tells me he has since come to terms with his tour in Vietnam, but not with lobster.

Right amounts

So what's the connection between lobster and email? In the right amounts, they're both a delicacy. Trouble is, some people believe that if a little is good, then a lot must be better. So they serve it up in mammoth portions.

Minutes from comminutes we didn't know existed, messages from people we've never even heard of... Finally, we get so bloated from the overload we can only sit around and groan.

Well, congratulations. Your boss has handed you the mandate to create Over-emailers Anonymous. You can now put your company on an email diet.

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner



To do so, ask your colleagues to consider the following questions. I've adapted them from "Business Wisdom of the Electronic Elite" by Geoffrey James (Times Books, 1996).

Need to know

Who needs it? Before email, it actually took time and effort to communicate. Imagine how much email volume would drop if FYTing took more than the touch of a "send" key? Before you press that button, ask yourself honestly: "does the recipient really need to see this?"

Can you condense it? You know why journalists put the most important stuff up front? Because most people never

make it to the end. Keep that in mind next time you write an email. Get to the point ASAP, and make your message ASAP (as short as possible). This is especially important now that many people have software that lets them scan the first two lines of emails without opening the entire message.

Can you give it a better name? Emails give you room for a "subject" or "headline," and there's a reason. A well-chosen headline prepares the recipient for what she's about to read. It tells the reader if the message really needs her time. And it gets your message a greater chance of getting read.

Strategic concerns

Can you do an archeological dig in your inbox? Sort through your email to determine how much of it is unnecessary, then share your results with your colleagues. This should provide powerful ammunition to your



ILLUSTRATION BY ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

argument that everyone needs to make his emailing more strategic.

Hopefully, after they've read your recommendations, your colleagues will be less generous when they dish out email. But tell them if they do, they can always send a question or comment to Working Wounded. We never tire of email-or lobster for

that matter.

(Mr. Rosner is the author of "The Boss's Survival Guide," McGraw Hill 2001, and "Working Wounded," Warner 2000, a speaker and founder of the award-winning Working Wounded.com & RetentionEvangelist.com. He is based in Seattle, Washington, USA. Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.)

People, Events & Products

Editor Aries Espinosa

aespino@inquirer.com.ph

A million-peso stopover for Jollibee winner

THE BREAKFAST stopover at Jollibee Urdaneta was worthwhile for Baby de Jesus, 54, as it brought her a passage towards winning a million pesos in the recently concluded "Bee a Millionaire" promo. Baby, her husband and her friends were on their way to Baguio to join the revelry of the Penabenga Festival when they decided to drop by a Jollibee store to fill their empty stomachs.

"I didn't expect that my name would be picked from the rest of the entries. It was my only entry for Bee a Millionaire. I frequent Jollibee a lot to feast on their Palabok Fiesta. But I had never bothered to claim the Bee a Millionaire coupons I was entitled to get because I was always on a rush. At that time when we stopped at Urdaneta, my friend persuaded me to join the raffle promo. Ince we still had time to spare, I decided to drop in my entry," De Jesus revealed.

Baby maintained that her current fortune is a blessing to her life. A retired employee, she runs a computer shop in Bulacan. But last December, something unexpected happened that had brought damage to her small business.

"My computer shop was ransacked. Unidentified men took all the computers and several other equipments. I had to set up again to retain my customers. It was frustrating but I don't want to harbor adverse feelings about the incident. So I just prayed and trust-

ed in the Lord that there is a purpose for everything.

"Tapos, ngayon, sobra-sobra ang binalik Niya sa akin," De Jesus said.

"Nagpapasalamat ako sa Poong Maykapal at sa Jollibee sa biyayang ito. Sana lalo pang magbigay ang Jollibee ng mga papremyong tulad nito," she continued.

The March draw capped the Bee a Millionaire promo of Jollibee, which is part of its 25th anniversary celebration. Jollibee has lined up more surprises and treats that would bring fun and joy to countless Filipinos who continue to patronize Jollibee. "We have prepared activities for everyone throughout the year. The Bee a Millionaire is just one of our special offerings to our customers," said Pinky Laurena, Jollibee marketing manager.

Keep yourself posted of Jollibee's latest promos. Visit your local Jollibee stores to know more about its latest offerings. You'll never know what surprise would be waiting. For sure, it would be something that would give you the "Feeling Jollibee...at 25, walang kasing sarap!"

THE JOLLIBEE mascot and officials award 'Bee a Millionaire' winner Baby de Jesus (center). She is flanked by (from left) Ditos Mendoza, marketing services manager, Inez Reyes, VP for marketing, Ariel Cotaco, store shift manager, Pepot Minana, RBU head of north Luzon, Leila Acosta, operations manager, Agnes Vistro, area manager, and Mahru Cereles, store manager.

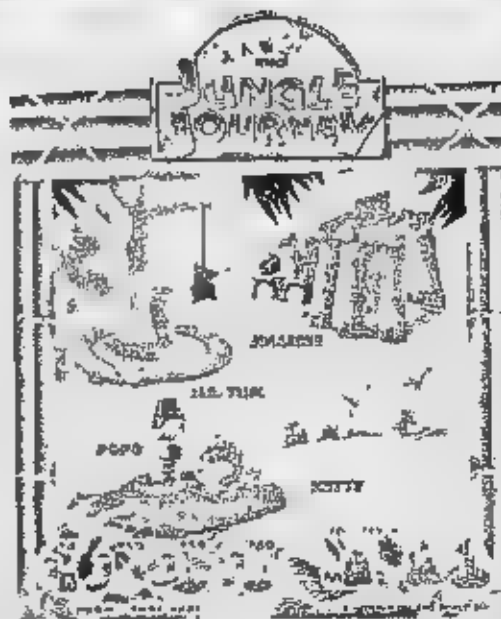


Journey to the Safari

YOUR kids don't need to go as far as the outback from Down Under or the jungles of untamed Africa to enjoy a safari escape. Let your kids hang on to their seats because Jollibee is bringing the backwoods adventure right into their hands through the Jolly Kiddie Meal Jungle Journey.

This new Jolly Kiddie Meal collection is a sure way to make playtime more fun and creative. Your kids will discover the wild animals with Jollibee, Hetty, Popo and Yum. It is a wild ride as Jollibee takes them through the jungle journey. Winding up Jollibee's vehicle will let the expedition begin. But there's no need to panic. Some of the animals are not too menacing like the elephant that Hetty feeds. What's more, Popo shows that a camera comes in handy in preserving jungle moments as he takes snapshots of the lion as it roars. Cap this through a share of laughter with Mr. Yum as he observes a monkey's silly antics, swinging up and down a tree.

These toys come with every Jolly Kiddie Meal of your kids' choice: Regular Yum, Jolly Hotdog, Spaghetti Special, and Chickenjoy. Hurry! Make your children discover the fun and excitement of the Jungle Journey minus the sunburns and heat waves. Add more color to their summer and complete their safari adventure collection with a "Feeling Jollibee...walang kasing sarap!"



Training Tausug Youth

START 'em young

Young Tausugs battle for new acquisitions—not arms, but knowledge as an innovative Leadership Training Seminar (LTS) was formally launched by the Young Moro Professionals (YMP) Network Inc., in coordination with the Sulu Provincial Government, Phil. Councilor's League Sulu and Sangguniang Kabataan Federation March 1 and 2 at the Sulu Panialawigan Hall, Jolo.

Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) and other select youth leaders from Sulu converged in Jolo for a training that engaged the 40 youths in concepts of management, Islamic leadership and law.

The pioneering and pilot project aims to instill concepts of making professional governance in the ARMM region, which hosts the poorest barrios in the country. The YMP extended the leadership seminar to another program in a Jolo secondary school for students in a Study Smart Seminar, which aims to encourage teenagers to take up college degrees.

Trainers and resource persons from the YMP are Sulu Board Member Edil Badduri, Ayesah Abubakar (AIM graduate), John Musa (AIM graduate), Jehanne Mutin (USAID), Jamal Amun (an entrepreneur) and Samira Ali Gutoc (National Youth Parliament Alumni Association).

YMP plans to launch another LTS in the Islamic City of Marawi in coordination with the local government.



PFIZER LOVING CARE AT CLARET

The SunSmart Kids School To School Tour recently visited the kindergarten department of Claret School in UP Village, Quezon City. The activity is a project of Pfizer Loving Care (PLC) and Events Plus in collaboration with the Department of Health and the Philippine Children's Medical Center Kids participated in the fun-filled activity and brought home lots of surprises from PLC. Highlight of the program was the storytelling session where a kids listened to the exciting beach adventure of the SunSmart Kid 'Mira' and her fiery friend 'Ting' Comprehensive educational

modules like activity booklets were given away to all the kids at the end of the program. Pfizer Loving Care is a line-up of reliable products that helps mothers take care of their kids better. This includes Caladryl, Bonamine, Terramycin and Basilin. All proven to be the gentle yet effective cure for your child's minor cuts, rashes, skin irritations, allergies and motion sickness. Shown is Dr. Cecille Nieve, pediatrician and pulmonologist from the Philippine Children's Medical Center (seated) with kindergarten students of Claret School during the storytelling session.



ROTARY GSE REPS OFF TO AUSTRALIA

The Rotary Club District 3370 presented its five official representatives to the Group Study Exchange (GSE) program in Perth, Western Australia during its annual district conference in Baguio City. This year's GSE batch is composed of (from left) public official Dennis Carlos (Meycauyan, Bulacan); educators Carlo Vadillo (Nueva Vizcaya) and Rose Bajan (Tuguegarao City); top marketing executive Vince Reyes (Calumpit, Bulacan); and forester Jaime Venturina Jr. (San Ildefonso, Bulacan). Also shown is GSE leader

Rotary past district governor Boy Valle Jr. (3rd from left). The GSE is a 6-week educational program of the Rotary Foundation of Rotary International, which aims to promote international understanding through an exchange of study teams composed of young professionals between paired districts in different countries. The Philippine group will be privileged to learn, immerse themselves in the culture, as well as establish further camaraderie with their Rotarian counterparts in Australia.



KKP CORPORATE PLANING MEET

Kaeser Kompressoren Phils. Inc. had just concluded their corporate planning meeting, which was held at the Hotel Rambrandt March 6 to 8 in Quezon City. The meeting was presided by Benedict Chai, regional manager for Asia Pacific. Kaeser Kompressoren Phils. Inc. is a direct subsidiary of Kaeser Kompressoren, the global compressed air solutions provider with more than 80 years experience. For more information, call 372-6642 and 415-9321, or log on to www.kaeser.com.

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Diocese of Laoag

P.O. Box 12, 2900 Laoag City, Ilocos Norte
Philippines

Telephone Numbers (077) 7705210 / 7720002 / 7720233

Fax Number (077) 7721805

Invitation

The Diocese of Laoag, through the office of the Bishop, invites interested investors/contractors to develop a 4 or 5-storey commercial building with address corner of F.R. Castro Avenue and Nolasco Streets covering a total land area of 1,462 (one thousand four hundred sixty two) square meters under the Build, Operate and Transfer (BOT) Scheme. The site is right at the heart of the city's commercial district.

Interested parties may contact Rev. Franklin Gorospe at the aforementioned address/telephone numbers.

(PDI-April 30, 2003)

Successful bar examinee

JOMAR Alvar A. Betita of the University of San Agustin College of Law in Iloilo City hurdled the 2002 Bar Examinations. He is the eldest son of Joatene Betita of Pototan, Iloilo and Maria Alvarez of Carles, Iloilo. He took his oath for admission to the bar together with the other successful examinees before the Supreme Court en banc last March 19 at the PICC.

Andrean golf tourney 2003

GRADUATES of High School Batch 1976 of Saint Andrew's School of Paranaque City will be organizing the first ever golf tournament titled "Para Kay San Andres-Charity Golf Tournament" for the improvement of school facilities. All Andreans are invited to join the event to be held on May 9 at the Philippine Navy Golf Club, Fort Bonifacio, Makati. Tee-off time is from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. Major sponsor of the game is Paranaque Mayor Joey P. Marquez. Proceeds of this tournament will be used for the upgrading of the school facilities and equipment. Interested alumni can call Nonoy Somillo at 776-7606 and 0917-8179532 and Rey Villanubin at 0918-

SM Mega sale starts

SM Megamall Ortigas and SM City Cagayan de Oro will hold a grand 3-day sale on May 2, 3 and 4. The 3-day sale offers up to 50 percent price breaks on great selections nationwide. Shoppers at SM Megamall Ortigas and SM City Cagayan de Oro will be treated to choice buys and great deals on groceries, apparel, toys, infant essentials, home furnishings and more. With the wide array of items available at terrific savings, your shopping money will definitely go a long way. Mall hours are from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. for SM Megamall Ortigas and from 9 a.m. to 10 p.m. for SM City Cagayan de Oro.

BVANHS alumni grand reunion

BENIGNO V. Aldana National High School (formerly Pozorrubio High School) in Pozorrubio, Pangasinan will hold the biggest ever Alumni Grand Reunion (AGR) on May 2 and 3 at the school campus. All Alumni from Class 1947 to 2003 are invited. The reunion will celebrate the school's 57th anniversary with the theme "Bringing Back the Missing Link...The Alumni". Interested parties can call Elvira Mendoza at 0920-5032804, Verina Almerat at 0918-7421289 or the batch coordinators.



Product Files



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Asian shares fly as easing SARS fears lift airlines

SINGAPORE—Asian stocks soared on Tuesday, scoring their biggest gains since the run-up to the Iraq war, as battered airline shares surged on hopes the SARS outbreak had peaked.

Strong US company results also contributed to gains of three percent in Hong Kong and Singapore stock benchmarks and five percent in South Korea, where easing tensions with North Korea were another driver. Japan was closed for a public holiday.

Australia's Qantas Airways Ltd., Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd. and Korean Air Line rebounded more than seven percent after tumbling in recent weeks as

SARS scared off travellers.

"We are covering short positions on stocks we sold because of SARS—Cathay and retailers," said YK Chan, investment strategist at VC CEF Brokerage in Hong Kong, where the Hang Seng Index was up 3.2 percent at midday.

Oil prices slipped to five-month lows on ample supplies, while the dollar held steady as the US stock rally and weak German economic data cooled demand for the euro.

A broad measure of Asian shares, the MSCI Asia Pacific ex-Japan Free Index, was up 2.7 percent at 0600 GMT, its biggest gain since the United States is-

sued its pre-war ultimatum to Iraq on March 18. That was just after the WHO sounded a worldwide health alert on SARS.

"First, the US market was strong overnight. People are also using the reason that the World Health Organisation has indicated that the SARS has peaked in Singapore," said Tan Choon Hoe, senior fund manager at AIB Govett (Asia) in Singapore. The island's Straits Times Index was up 3.0 percent in early afternoon trade.

The World Health Organization said on Monday the SARS outbreak had peaked in Hong Kong, Singapore, Vietnam and

Canada. It remained concerned about China, where shares fell on uncertainty over whether regulators would impose an extended market holiday to curb the spread of SARS.

Asian stocks were also lifted by big gains in US shares after solid results from blue chips McDonald's Corp. and Procter & Gamble Co. sparked optimism for a rebound in the US economy.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average finished up two percent at 8,471.61, its biggest rally since April 2. The Nasdaq Composite Index advanced 1.9 percent to 1,462.24.

South Korean stocks closed up

five percent, their biggest gain in three weeks, helped by news that North Korea had offered to scrap its nuclear weapons in return for concessions from the United States. Shares rose 1.5 percent in Taiwan and 1.1 percent in Australia.

But worries about SARS remained. WHO officials said its warning to travellers against visiting Hong Kong was likely to remain in place for at least another few weeks and the SARS outbreak was intensifying in China.

"We are so close with China geographically and economically. If the situation is not brought under control there, it will affect busi-

ness here," said Frederick Tsang, research director at China Everbright Group in Hong Kong.

Oil extended its losing streak, weighed down by worries over ample supplies after an OPEC production agreement offered little in the way of real cuts in output.

US light crude slid three quarters of a percent to \$25.30 a barrel, around its lowest since November.

The euro was hovering under \$1.1000, little changed from late US trade, after falling from a near four-year high of \$1.1078 on Monday following weaker than expected German economic data. **Reuters**

NZ says EU reform needed to save talks

PARIS—New Zealand, a leading member of the free farm trade Cairns Group, on Monday called on the European Union to reform its agricultural subsidy system to save stalled world trade talks launched in late 2001 in Doha.

New Zealand's Trade and Farm Minister Jim Sutton, visiting Paris, said that the EU's 40-billion-euro a year Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) was the "biggest single obstacle" to progress in the talks, which are due to wrap up in 2005 but have made scant progress so far.

An end-March deadline for an outline to farm trade talks has been missed and with the world's major powers still at odds over the US-led war on Iraq, fears are mounting that a new World Trade Organization (WTO) deal to lower trade barriers and boost the flagging global economy could fail.

"It is very difficult to see any successful outcome to the Doha Round unless Europe embraces sufficient agricultural reform," Sutton told a news conference.

Sutton is among top trade negotiators who have gathered in

Paris for several days of annual meetings organized by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Among them are EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy and US Trade Representative Robert Zoellick.

Sutton said Europe had to commit to a drastic reduction in its farm export subsidies with a view to eliminating them, and there had to be big cuts in trade-distorting domestic subsidies.

The EU's latest proposals on shaking up its farm subsidies have run into traditionally fierce opposition from France, the bloc's agricultural powerhouse. Paris, fearing an end to lucrative subsidies, wants to delay reform until after 2006.

EU members are heading for a major showdown at a farm ministers' meeting in June, the self-imposed deadline for a deal, just a few months ahead of a key WTO ministerial meeting in Mexico in September that is supposed to set the agenda for the second half of the overall trade round negotiations. **Reuters**



Young women walk past a huge picture on a building advertising a new shop of the French brand Chanel at a Tokyo shopping district. European luxury fashion brands such as Chanel, Cartier, Ferragamo and Gucci will open their new big shops in the area despite Japan's slack economy. **AFP**

Japan mulls ways to rescue stock market

TOKYO—The Japanese government is considering putting together emergency measures next week to shore up stocks prices after the key index of the Tokyo Stock Exchange fell to a new two-decade low, reports said Tuesday.

The leading proposal is to reinforce the Bank Shareholdings Purchase Corp., a governmental body set up to purchase shares from banks, the Nihon Keizai and Yomiuri newspapers said.

The government and ruling parties are considering temporarily scrapping a requirement that banks pay a fee of eight percent of the selling price of shares bought by the body, they said without naming sources.

The mass-circulation Yomiuri said another idea being proposed is to increase the government's investment in stocks through the massive pool of postal savings and insurance.

The Nihon Keizai business daily said the temporary abolition of the requirement for the banks to pay fees to the purchase body could last for one to two years.

Supporters of the idea believe the abolition of the fees would encourage banks to make more use of the special corporation. Its share purchases have so far totaled only 220 billion yen (\$1.8 billion) since February last year, it said. **AFP**

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US regulators finalize \$1.4-B Wall St. settlement

WASHINGTON/NEW YORK—US market regulators unveiled final terms on Monday of a record \$1.4-billion settlement with Wall Street's major brokerages over biased company research and said probes continued into the conduct of senior executives at the investment banks.

Ten top financial firms, while admitting no wrongdoing, agreed to pay to settle allegations that analysts issued slanted reports—mainly during the 1990s technology and telecommunications stock bubble—to curry favor with corporate managers and gain investment banking business.

Marking the end of a star system among Wall Street analysts, the settlement banned two former bright lights from the securities industry for life—ex-Merrill Lynch & Co. Internet analyst Henry Blodget and Jack Grubman, once the top telecommunications analyst at the Salomon Smith Barney brokerage unit of financial giant Citigroup Inc. Merrill, Citigroup and Swiss-owned Credit Suisse Group's CSFB settled charges of securities fraud in the agreement, said Securities and Exchange Commission

Chair William Donaldson at a news conference.

The three, along with seven other firms—including Goldman Sachs Group and Morgan Stanley—also settled lesser charges of breaking market rules and agreed to a set of structural reforms to make analysts more independent.

Donaldson said the SEC and other government agencies continued to look into the conduct of senior brokerage executives who managed the analysts.

"It's an ongoing issue with us in terms of supervision," he told Reuters in an interview after the news conference.

New York Attorney General Eliot Spitzer said, "There will be further actions against individuals linked to analyst conflicts of interest and other related wrongdoing. My office continues several investigations, as does the SEC and NASD."

Spitzer, who led early probes of analyst misconduct, hailed the settlement as an "inflection point" in market history, assembling the Progressive Era reforms of the early 1900s.



Securities and Exchange Commission Chair William Donaldson (left), National Association of Securities Dealers Chair and CEO Robert Glauert (center) and New York Stock Exchange Chair Richard Grasso listen to a question by a reporter during an SEC briefing to announce a \$1.4-billion settlement against Wall Street investment banks in Washington.

But Iowa Republican Sen. Charles Grassley, who has been hammering the SEC on tax and insurance aspects of the

settlement, said it "looks like half a loaf." Grassley said he was concerned the brokerages might be able to deduct "one-

third or more" of their \$1.4 billion payment from their taxes and get insurers to cover some of the bill.

"What the firms are bragging about, this \$1.4 billion, ends up being a lot less than \$1.4 billion," Grassley said. That's a slap on the wrist, not a real punishment. The SEC publicly released about 3,000 pages of memos, e-mails and court records in announcing the settlement, which was filed with the courts for review.

Plaintiffs' lawyers were expected to begin poring over the evidence and soon unleash a new wave of civil litigation, which could cost investment banks far more than the settlement itself, said plaintiffs' lawyers.

Other brokerages involved in the settlement included Bear Stearns, Lehman Brothers, J.P. Morgan Chase, the Piper Jaffray unit of US Bancorp and the UBS Warburg unit of UBS AG.

"We are talking about tens of billions of dollars in future settlements here," said Thomas Ajamie, a plaintiff's attorney who won a record \$429-million arbitration award against a PaineWebber broker in 2001.

Reuters

Merrill's Komansky retires after 35 years

NEW YORK—David Komansky, a Wall Street veteran who rose through the ranks to become chairman of giant brokerage Merrill Lynch & Co., stepped down on Monday at Merrill's annual meeting, after spending 35 years at the firm.

Komansky's departure, long expected, leaves Chief Executive Stan O'Neal alone at the helm of Merrill, which currently has \$1.1 trillion in assets.

"David Komansky has been one of the major contributors to the financial community's progress throughout the world during his tenure at Merrill Lynch," said John Gutfreund, who ran investment bank Sa-

lomon Brothers in the 1980s.

Komansky, who kept a picture of the tenement building in which he grew up hanging inside his office, worked his way through a number of positions at Merrill before being named president and chief operating officer in 1995. He took over as CEO in December 1996.

"It was a great run," Komansky told Reuters after the meeting. However, he acknowledged that 2002 was a rough year.

"This past year was a difficult year to be in business for our company, our clients and our industry," he told shareholders during the meeting. Reuters

Stock market data show conflicts of interest

NEW YORK—New York State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer and other regulators dumped hundreds of pages of evidence into the public domain on Monday, providing an inside view of how stock analysts worked hand in glove with bankers to win business.

Reports covering investigations into 10 investment banks that signed onto a \$1.4-billion Wall Street research settlement aim to show that stock analysts often lied to investors to win business for their firms.

The reports are laced with exchanges like this one between a UBS Warburg sales manager and one of its telecommunications analysts: "The sales force is extremely frustrated with your research" and for "having lost hundreds of millions of dollars for people," the sales manager complained in an e-mail.

The analyst responded that he'd never issue a "hold" rating on a stock unless, "1) If I believe the company is about to go bankrupt; (or) 2) If there is no investment banking business to be had there."

In another e-mail, a Lehman Brothers analyst complained to his supervisor about the in-

fluence that investment banking has exerted on his coverage.

"Enough is enough," he said. "It's hard enough to be right about stocks, it's even harder to build customer relationships when all of your companies blow up, you knew they were going to, and you couldn't say anything."

To be sure, the e-mail passages by themselves don't prove fraud or other securities violations. The evidence is incriminating, though, and both the volume of exchanges and the number of investment banks involved shows that the abuse wasn't isolated.

"One of the main reasons that we released this in one shot was that this was an industry-wide problem, and not one that can be singled out," said Anthony Taggart, the director of Utah's Division of Securities, the office responsible for investigating investment bank Goldman Sachs Group Inc.

A key rationale for releasing the document evidence was to provide private investors who lost money with ammunition to bring their own lawsuits, said Taggart.

The Securities and Exchange Commission

complaints are made available on its website, while individual states have compiled evidence into reports and made them available on websites or through special request.

The New York Attorney General's Office, for instance, has made downloadable reports available for Citigroup Inc. and Morgan Stanley.

In its 300-page Morgan Stanley report, for example, there are numerous presentations by the investment bank to potential clients that promote Internet maven Mary Meeker and other analysts to help win underwriting business.

The underlying theme is the pressure that analysts were under to help win mandates to manage IPOs.

In one self-evaluation, Meeker wrote: "Bottom line, my highest and best use is to help (Morgan Stanley) win the best Internet IPO mandates."

Once companies had been taken public, there was often pressure on analysts to maintain high ratings because companies could generate more underwriting fees from follow-on stock sales.

Reuters

Boeing chairman defends performance in tough times

CHICAGO—Boeing Co. Chairman and Chief Executive Phil Condit, facing shareholders at the company's annual meeting on Monday, was unable to promise a turnaround anytime soon in the downtrodden commercial aviation sector.

But he maintained that the world's largest commercial jet manufacturer is far better off today than had it never diversified into other businesses, particularly military contracting, starting in 1996.

Boeing shares have plunged 37 percent since the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks that sent the aviation sector into an unprecedented downturn. But Condit defended the company's 2002 performance in the face of many challenges.

"Our financial results in 2002 were good considering the downturn," he told shareholders. Net income before accounting changes fell 18 percent in 2002 to \$2.32 bil-

lion, while revenue fell 7 percent to \$54 billion.

The latest travail to impact the commercial aviation sector is the deadly viral disease called Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, or SARS, which is depressing air travel in Pacific Rim, particularly to and within China and Hong Kong.

"SARS is still an unknown," Condit told reporters at a briefing after the shareholder meetings.

The blow to international travel due to SARS and the conflict in Iraq built on woes in the US airline industry stemming from the Sept. 11 attacks and the weakened US economy.

The industry's challenges have naturally had a big impact on Chicago-based Boeing, which derived 53 percent of its revenue last year from commercial airplanes.

Reuters

Global chip sales growth slows

SAN FRANCISCO—Global semiconductor sales growth slowed in March, prompting a chip trade group on Monday to lower its forecast for 2003.

The US-based Semiconductor Industry Association lowered its chip industry forecast to 10 percent to 15 percent growth this year, from a forecast of nearly 20 percent growth and second-quarter growth of 3.5 percent to 5.5 percent.

The 2002 forecast is still more bullish than predictions from analysts, who are looking for growth of from 5 percent to the low teens in general.

The trade group dismissed many of the concerns that chip industry watchers see as potentially derailing growth in the second half, including inventory build-up and Severe

Acute Respiratory Syndrome.

"The recovery that has been under way for 15 months, did have a pause in February, but bounced back in March," George Scallie, president of the SIA, said in a conference call.

"Increased demand and slightly lower inventory should bode well for this market place. We still anticipate corporate PC upgrade cycle buying."

Worldwide chip sales in March were \$12.13 billion, up 2.6 percent from February, and up 13 percent year over year, according to the World Semiconductor Trade Statistics (WSTS) and the SIA. That compared with year-over-year growth of 18 percent in February, traditionally a slow month.

Reuters

Song-swapping fight to go on

LONDON—The music industry on Monday pledged to fight on with its global legal battle to stifle online copyright abuse despite last week's unexpected setback in a US court.

US District Court Judge Stephen Wilson on Friday dealt a major blow to the major music labels and Hollywood studios in their fight against online piracy, ruling Internet file-sharing services Grokster and Morphius can remain open for business.

Judge Wilson ruled Grokster and Morphius could not be shut down because they cannot control what is traded over their systems even if the material exchanged is copyright protected.

In contrast, the original song-trading network Napster was shut down by a US Federal court judge two years ago as its older technology hosted a central index of copyrighted files.

The Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), had sought a court injunction to shut down Grokster, Morphius and a third party, Kazaa, for operating services that allow Internet users to trade all types of copyright-protected materials.

The trade groups represent the film- and music-making divisions of AOL Time Warner, Vivendi Universal, Bertelsmann AG and Sony Corp. to name a few.

Reuters

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Republic of the Philippines
Province of Davao
CITY OF PANABO
OFFICE OF THE CITY MAYOR
TeleFax: (084) 828-5284 / 822-2179
E-mail: cityofpanabo@yahoo.com

Invitation for Bids

Date: 28 April 2003
Contract Identification No.: PCE-001
World Bank Loan No.: 4228 PH
World Bank Loan Name: WDDP-USSP

1. Land Bank of the Philippines (LBP) has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) toward the cost of Water District Development Project - Urban Sewerage, Sanitation and Drainage Component (WDDP-USSP) and intends to apply part of the proceeds of this loan to payment under the contract for City Government of Panabo's Bantayayay Environmental, and Sanitation Plan (BESP).

2. The City Government of Panabo, Davao del Norte, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the supply of drainage equipment. This equipment will be used for the operation and maintenance of sanitation and drainage facilities, which is describe below:

Item No.	Description	Quantity
1	Vacuum Tanker, 3 cu.m. capacity (minimum), trailer mounted	

3. Bidding will be conducted through the national competitive bidding procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines, Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits, and is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the Guidelines.

4. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from the office of the Mayor and inspect the bidding documents at the address given below during office hours.

5. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written application to the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Philippine Pesos One Thousand (P1,000.00) in cash or manager's cheque in favor to the City Treasurer's Office of Panabo City.

6. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 2:00 p.m., 29 May 2003. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of US\$5,000 or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency and shall be valid for 120 days after bid opening. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidder's representatives who choose to attend at this address below at 2:00 p.m., 29 May 2003.

7. The Purchaser reserves the right to accept or reject any bids, and to cancel the bidding process and reject all bids, at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders or any obligation to inform the affected Bidder or Bidders of the grounds for the Purchaser's action.

Name and Office Address of the Purchaser

c/o: Engr. Zalia C. Budin Jr.
OPDC/PMU COORDINATOR/SBAC Secretariat
City of Panabo
Province of Davao del Norte
Telephone: (084) 828-5281
Telefax: (084) 822-2282

(Sgd.) REY P. GAVINA
City Mayor/SBAC Chairman

(PDI-April 28, 2003)



National Transmission Corporation

TRANSCO INTEGRATED TRAINING PROGRAM

In order to provide new graduates of engineering and technical/vocational courses the opportunity to acquire actual experience in the field of electrical power transmission, the National Transmission Corporation (TransCo), created by virtue of Republic Act 8136 (the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001) is a government-owned and controlled corporation that has assumed the electrical transmission functions in the major Philippine grids, announces the offering of its Integrated Training Program, specifically the Cadetship and Apprenticeship Programs for year 2003.

1. Cadetship Program - on the job training for a period of six (6) months program for graduates of Electrical and Electronics & Communication engineering courses

2. Apprenticeship Program - on the job training for a period of six (6) months for graduates of technical/vocational courses (Technician, Electrician, Mechanic, Lineman).

Qualification/Requirements:

- Not more than twenty five (25) years of age
- Residents of Metro Manila
- Must pass the TransCo psychological examination for Apprenticeship Program
- Must pass the TransCo psychological and technical examinations for Cadetship Program
- Official Transcript of Records (no failing grades in major subjects)

Interested applicants should personally apply and accomplish application form at Human Resource Training Division, Human Resources Department, Ground Floor, Power Center Building, Quezon Avenue corner BRL Road, Diliman, Quezon City from May 5 to 15, 2003 at 1:30 p.m.

For Cadetship Program, only those who pass the psychological examination will be qualified to take the technical examination scheduled on May 31, 2003 (Saturday).

HUMAN RESOURCE TRAINING DIVISION
Human Resources Department
Power Center Building, Diliman, Quezon City
Telephone No. 822-5873

(PDI-April 27-30 & May 4, 2003)

Office of the President



Bases Conversion Development Authority

INVITATION FOR PROPOSALS

ASSET DISPOSITION PROGRAM - PHASE 2

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) is inviting interested proponents to participate in Phase 2 of BCDA's Asset Disposition Program (ADP Phase 2). ADP Phase 2 involves the development and privatization of the following BCDA properties:

- Twenty-five (25) hectares located at Fort Bonifacio, Taguig, Metro Manila, bounded on the north by American Battle Monument and east by C-5; and
- Five (5) hectares located at the former Camp Bago Bantay, Brgy. Sto. Cristo, Bago-Bantay, Quezon City between SM City Annex and Mindanao Avenue

Interested proponents may submit their Letters of Interest to BCDA and can purchase the Terms of Reference (TOR) for ADP Phase 2 that outlines, among others, the requirements for proponents interested to participate in the privatization.

The TORs for the above properties will be ready for distribution to interested proponents by 23 April 2003 at the BCDA offices at a non-refundable cost of P10,000.00 for each TOR, payable to BCDA in Cash or Manager's Check.

A pre-qualification conference among interested proponents is set for 2:00 p.m., 07 May 2003. The objective of the pre-qualification conference is to discuss the property, the TOR and other issues that may be raised by interested proponents.

Interested proponents can direct their inquiries to Ms. Alleen An. R. Soza or Ms. Bambie L. Andai at telephone numbers 510-0420 to 510-0411 or at arzosa@boda.gov.ph or bandai@boda.gov.ph

(Sgd.) RUFO COLAYCO
President and Chief Executive Officer

(PDI-April 14, 23 & 30, 2003)

WEDNESDAY,
APRIL 30, 2003

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 90, QUEZON CITY

IN RE: PETITION FOR
CORPORATE REHABILITATION OF
SPECIAL PROCEEDING NO. CL-03-047

Before this court is a verified petition/application for

rehabilitation of the petitioner corporation and on the basis of projected financial conditions for the next five (5) years. It has a good chance of being rehabilitated. The rehabilitation plan calls for the increase in sales through an aggressive marketing sales force, the improvement and full development of the Serrano Memorial Park project in Quezon City to attract more buyers within the community, the development and operation of the two (2) Davao City properties as memorial parks, the restructuring of its GSIS loan of P100,000,000 (principal amount), the adoption of a more aggressive approach geared towards the extensive collection of its receivables, among other things. Consequently, the petitioner prays for the issuance of a Stay Order pending proceedings before this Court.

A careful examination of the petition shows that it conforms substantially with Section 2, Rule 4 of the Interim Rules of Procedure on Corporate Rehabilitation (see also Supreme Court Resolution en banc in A.M. No. 00-B-0-SC-3). This Court therefore finds the petition to be sufficient in form and substance.

IN VIEW OF THE FOREGOING, this Court issues a Stay Order in accordance with Section 6, Rule 4 of the aforesaid Interim Rules, as follows:

- Appointing Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga, a certified public accountant by profession, as rehabilitation receiver who shall be considered as an officer of the court and who shall have the powers, duties and functions as provided in Section 14, Rule 4 of the aforesaid Interim Rules. The rehabilitation receiver must post a bond of P100,000.00 before entering upon his powers, duties and functions and must take an oath as provided under Section 15, Rule 4 of the aforesaid Interim Rules. The petitioner is directed to serve immediately a copy of this Stay Order upon the rehabilitation receiver, Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga who shall manifest his acceptance or non-acceptance of his appointment not later than (10) days from receipt hereof.
- Staying enforcement of all claims, whether for money or otherwise and whether such enforcement is by court action or otherwise, against the petitioner and its guarantors and sureties not necessary with the petitioner including the staying of proceedings of collection cases filed against the petitioner, and the staying of the enforcement/foreclosure sales and actual foreclosure sales, if any, against the real and personal properties of the petitioner.
- Prohibiting the petitioner from selling, encumbering, transferring, or disposing in any manner any of its properties except in the ordinary course of business;
- Prohibiting the petitioner from making any payment of its liabilities outstanding as at the date of the filing of the petition (April 2, 2003);
- Prohibiting the petitioner from withholding supply of goods and services in the ordinary course of business for as long as the petitioner makes payments for the services and goods supplied after the issuance of this Stay Order;
- Directing the petitioner to pay in full all administrative expenses incurred after the issuance of this Stay Order.

The initial hearing on the petition is set on May 27, 2003 at the Ground Floor of the Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall complex, Quezon City. All creditors and all interested parties including the Securities and Exchange Commission are directed to file with this Court and serve upon the petitioner a verified comment on or opposition to the petition, with supporting affidavits and documents, not later than ten (10) days before the date of the initial hearing as set forth above, and they are put on notice that their failure to do so will bar them from participating in the proceedings before this Court. All creditors and all interested parties are further directed to secure from this Court copies of the petition and its annexes within such time as to enable them to file their verified comment on or opposition to the petition and to prepare them for the initial hearing of the petition, and to attend the purpose. The petitioner is ordered to file with this Court initially fifteen (15) additional copies of the petition and its annexes within ten (10) days from receipt hereof.

The petitioner is furthermore directed by this Court to publish a copy of this Order in the Philippine Daily Inquirer and one other newspaper of general circulation in the Philippines with widespread circulation in Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. It is a newspaper other than the herein-named newspaper, considering the presence of creditors and the location of properties in Luzon and Mindanao as alleged in the petition, once a week for two (2) consecutive weeks, with the last publication effected at least three (3) weeks prior to the date of initial hearing as set forth above, for wider dissemination to all interested parties, at the expense of the petitioner.

The Process Server of this Court is ordered to serve immediately copies of this Stay Order upon: 1. Mr. Marcelino F. Cuan (the duly authorized representative of the petitioner), No. 22 Makin Street, Diliman, Quezon City; 2. Atty. Ernesto C. Perez, Suite 507, ALPAP II Building, Trade Street corner Investment Drive, Macapagal Business Park, Ayala Alabang, 1770 Marikina City; 3. Mr. Rodolfo F. Salanga, 148 C. Cruz Street, BF Resort Village, Las Pinas City; 4. the Honorable Chairman, Securities and Exchange Commission: EDSA (Epifanio de los Santos Avenue), Mandaluyong, Metro Manila.

SO ORDERED

Quezon City, April 8, 2003

(Sgd.) REYNALDO B. DAWAY
Presiding Judge

(PDI-April 30 & May 6, 2003)

ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR
APPROVAL OF A REDUCTION IN RATES BE
COMPLIANCE WITH SECTION 10 OF REPUBLIC ACT
NO. 8136 AND EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 119, WITH
PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2003-14

PANGASIAN ELECTRIC
COOPERATIVE, INC. (PANELCO)
Applicant

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES

Notice is hereby given of the filing by applicant Pangasian Electric Cooperative Inc. (PANELCO) on February 14, 2003 of an application for the approval of a reduction in rates in compliance with Section 10 of Republic Act No. 8136 and Executive Order No. 119 with prayer for provisional authority, docketed as ERC Case No. 2003-14. The applicant proposed a reduction in rates equivalent to 2.00%.

Notice is also given of the Commission's decision on the application, which shall be issued within 15 days from the date of the public hearing.

All interested parties who may wish to comment on or oppose the said application must file their comments and/or oppositions on or before the date of the public hearing. Such parties may wish to have the details of the application and who shall file comments on or opposition to the application, which shall be filed with the Commission, may request for before the date of the hearing, may be furnished with copies of the application by the applicant, which is hereby directed to furnish the parties wishing such request with copies of the application and its annexes, within any such request party may submit the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the date of the public hearing.

WITNESSE: the Honorable LETICIA V. JAY, MARY ANNE B. COLAYCO, OLIVER B. BUTALDO and CARLOS R. ALONSO, Commissioners, Energy Regulatory Commission, 1st Floor of the Commission Building, Pasig City.

(Sgd.) FRANCISCO C. LAGUARDIA, JR.
Executive Director III

(PDI-April 23 & 30, 2003)

NOTICE OF DISSOLUTION

OF
ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC.

Notice is hereby given that ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC. will file with the Securities and Exchange Commission a Certificate of Amendment of Articles of Incorporation shortening its corporate life to March 31, 2003.

Any person who may have a claim against said corporation may present the same to the undersigned at c/o ALPAP 1 Bldg., 5th Floor, 140 L.P. Lavista Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City.

This announcement serves as notice to all parties concerned of the dissolution of said Company.

(Sgd.) RENATO G. CALMA
Corporate Secretary
ANAM INSTRUMENTS (PHILIPPINES), INC.
(PDI-April 18, 23 & 30, 2003)

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Republic of the Philippines
City of Parañaque
Metro Manila

Office of the Treasurer

NOTICE OF AUCTION SALE

To satisfy the real estate tax delinquency of the following taxpayers, computation of which includes interest, surcharges and penalties thereon as of December 31, 2002 and after substantially complying with the pertinent provisions of Republic Act 7160, the City Mayor through the undersigned City Treasurer, hereby gives notice to all interested parties and to the public in general that on May 7, 2003 at 9:00 o'clock in the morning at the Legislative Building 2nd Floor City Hall of Parañaque City, the City Treasurer or his authorized representatives will sell at public auction to the highest bidder for cash and in Philippine Currency, the real estate properties described below:

Declarer Owner / Location	Area (Sq.m.)	Classification / Delinquency Yr.	Tax Dec. Numbers	Amount of Delinquency	Amount of Delinquency as of March, 2003	Total Amt. of Delinquency
1. Edwin Olivarez Lot-15-A-B&L, 101 Bresham St. Phase 3 Brgy. B.F. Homes		Res. Imp. 1996-2002	E001-00436	94,942.40	60,220.58	155,162.98
2. Sps. Pablo Olivarez and Rosario De Leon TCT (S-26159) 94993 Lot-4734-A Brgy. B.F. Homes	7,557	Office Raveland 1989-2002	E001-00868	163,775.40	152,495.57	296,261.07
3. Olivarez Realty Corp. Cinema 1 & 2 Balcón Lobby Projector Room Stairs Corridor Parking Space Lot-2-E, 2-F Brgy. San Dionisio	1,796.67 827.40 181.12 54 1,717.25 658.75 1,529.50	Com. Imp. 1996-2002	E010-02952	4,044,858.80	2,565,469.26	6,610,328.06
4. Pablo Olivarez Warehouse Office Sucat Road Brgy. San Dionisio	1,530 7,498 3,805	Ind. Bldg. (Unimval. Imp.) 1989-2002	E010-09569	7,766,333.60	6,511,536.76	16,306,670.36
5. Pablo Olivarez Brgy. San Dionisio		Ind. Imp. 1996-2002	E010-06332	1,069,753.20	2,422,284.94	4,392,038.14
6. Olivarez General Hospital Sucat Road Brgy. San Dionisio		Hospital 1989-2002	E010-06835	103,831.50	136,713.09	242,545.09
7. Esteban Cruz TCT No. (S-50700) Olivarez Realty Corp. TCT (111761) - 132125	12,360 11,413	Land. Com. (Unimval. Comm.) Land 1996-2002	E011-03811	5,497,095.00	3,402,946.00	8,900,041.00
8. Sps. Rosario DL Olivarez TCT (111765) - 20359 Dr. A. Santos Ave. Brgy. San Isidro	4,522	Com. Land 1996-2002	E010-07632	2,804,028.00	1,851,252.43	4,655,280.43
9. Pablo & Rosario Olivarez, 1st Floor 2nd Floor Brgy. San Dionisio	2,620 280 280	Warehouse 1989-2002	E010-07632	2,804,028.00	1,851,252.43	4,655,280.43
10. Mr. Hilda C. Badong TCT 118555 Brgy. Moonville	600	Land. Res. 2001-2002	E008-06732	5,790.00	2,419.20	8,179.20
11. Mr. Hilda C. Badong Brgy. Moonville		Bldg. Res. 1990-2002	E008-06733	160,379.36	165,312.64	315,692.00
12. People's Air Cargo & Warehousing Co. Inc. Warehouse 1st Flr. Office Second Floor Tower Locker Shed Parking Brgy. Sto. Niño	171,180 350 475 17,678.01	Com. Imp. 1987-2002	E013-03546	23,637,085.40	14,854,980.56	38,292,045.96
13. Apollonio Mery Brgy. San Martin De Porres		1994-2002	E012-04110	165,240.00	106,822.60	272,062.60
14. Prudencio G. Santos TCT-37988 Seneca Compound Brgy. Don Bosco	5,724	Land. Res. 1979-2002	E003-01273	278,362.60	287,089.66	565,352.48
Sub-Total						38,484,362.44

(Sgd.) LIBERATO M. CARABEO
City Treasurer

(PDI-April 28 & 30, 2003)



Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bataan Economic Zone

Tel. Nos. (047) 935-4004, (047) 561-245-1, (047) 935-5002
Fax Nos. (047) 935-6046, E-Mail: bez@onet.net.ph
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

28 April 2003

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) invites interested parties to apply for eligibility and to bid for the project as listed below:

Name of Project : REHABILITATION OF SFB NOS. 3, 5, 6 & 11
Location : BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan

Prospective bidders must be duly licensed by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) and registered as "Medium S" for buildings by the Inter-Agency Committee for Registration and Classification of Contractors for Government Infrastructure Projects. Eligibility requirements/forms will be made available to Contractors upon submission of the below listed required documents at the BAC Secretariat, EMD Office, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan, as follows:

- Letter of Intent
- Certificate of Contractor's Renewal from PCAB and License (Bring Original copy for authentication purposes)

The particulars and schedule of activities for the bidding process are listed below:

Name of Project	Invitation and Price of Eligibility Form	Deadline for Submission of Accomplished Eligibility Form	Issuance of Bid Documents	Price of Non-refundable Fee for Bid Documents	Approved Budget for the Project	Domestic Contract	Pre-Bid Conference	Submission and Opening of Bids
Rehabilitation of SFB Nos. 3, 5, 6 & 11	PhP200.00	May 14, 2003 5:00 P.m.	May 20-28, 2003	PhP 3,000.00	22,800,000.00	365 days	June 5, 2003 2:00 P.M.	June 23, 2003 2:00 P.M.
	BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat	BAC Secretariat	Finance			Audio Visual	Audio Visual
	1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg	1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg	1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg	1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg			1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg	1st Flr. BEZ Admin Bldg

SCOPE OF WORK:

- Re-roofing
- Rehab/repair of corridor rooms
- Plumbing works (water & sewer lines, fixtures & fittings)
- Repainting of exterior and interior walls
- Fire fighting equipment and accessories
- Tileworks, window frames, glass and glazing
- Electrical works
- Replacement of ceiling canvas downspouts
- Other repair works

EQUIPMENT REQUIREMENTS:

- Generator, two (2) units (owned)
- Welding machine two (2) units (owned)

The two (2) envelope system shall be adopted and the provisions of Executive Order No. 40, Series of 2001 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations shall apply in the bidding.

For further particulars, please contact Ms. Catalina G. Desamio/Engr. Aniceto P. Gonzales, BAC Secretariat, EMD Office, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan or at Tel. No. (047) 935-4008.

The PEZA reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any defect or informality contained therein and to accept and award the contract to any bidder whose proposal is deemed most advantageous to the government. The PEZA neither assumes any obligation for any loss whatsoever that may be incurred by the bidders in the preparation of bids nor does it guarantee that an award will be made.

(Sgd.) DIONISIO T. RAMEN
Chairperson, Bids & Awards Committee

(PDI-April 30 & May 7, 2003)

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OBITUARIES

"Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in you."
Psalm 56:3

GENEDINA G. HABITO

of Malinao, Pasig City

Peacefully joined her Creator
on Sunday, 27th of April 2003 at the age of 52.

Her beloved husband Alberto C. Habito; daughter Rosalyn G. Habito; mother Consolacion Gatchalian; sisters Baby and Elvie; brothers Tony, Raul, Eduardo, Reynaldo, Wilfredo, Rufino Jr.; sisters-in-law Ellen, Mila, Susan, Tessie, and Jay; cousins, nephews and nieces request fervent prayers and special petitions for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Arlington East, C. Raymundo Street corner Mercedes Avenue, San Miguel, Pasig City.

Interment will take place on Saturday, 3rd of May 2003 at Pasig Catholic Cemetery following the 9:00 a.m. Holy Mass at Arlington East The Garden Chapels.

Dr. Ramon "Boy" Villagrancia Blanca, Sr.

Has joined his Creator on April 24, 2003
at the age of 68.

Former Constitutional Convention Delegate 1971
Former Assemblyman, Sangguniang Pampook Region IX 1978-1986
University of Santo Tomas College of Medicine Graduate Class 1958

His loving wife
Former Mayor Encarnacion "Encar" Ortega Blanca
Sons and Daughters-in-law
Dr. Ramon "Junjie" O. Blanca, Jr. & Dr. Ma. Rovell Adolfo Blanca
Dr. Ramon "Am" O. Blanca & Via Marquez Blanca
Daughter,
Blanche Lou "Blanche" O. Blanca
Grand Daughters,
Cheska Roraine Blanca, Alyanna Erika Blanca and Nicole Blanca
Pelagio A. Blanca and Lourdes V. Blanca (deceased parents)

Sisters and Brothers-in-law
Dr. Fely "Baby" & Jesus "Boy" Bajamunde, Sr.
Osita "Chit" & Valentin "Val" La Viña
Liberty "Bert" & Atty. Arsenio "Jun" Gonzalez, Jr.
Gloria "Glor" & the late Jaime "Jimmy" Atilano

Relatives & Friends request the pious readers
to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Blanca residence,
Molave, Zamboanga del Sur

Interment will be on May 3, 2003
after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.



ENGINEER LEONARDO CABAATAN NUESA

United Nations Expert and Ministry Expert,
Ministry of Communications Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
and formerly Materials Research Engineer
of then Bureau of Public Highways

Died in the Grace of our Lord on April 26, 2003 at the age of 85.

His remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels,
Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

His loving wife ANTONIA, his children AQUILINA & HUGHIE,
BENJAMIN & GLORIA, LETICIA & STEPHEN, BELLA & CARL,
CARLO & MYRNA with his grandchildren DOMINIC, EVE,
ANTONETTE, KYLE, ALEX, VALERIE and BERNARD; relatives and
friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul

Interment will be announced later.

ERNESTO MATEO AQUINO

(November 7, 1935 - April 28, 2003)

of Batangas City

Peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 67.

His beloved wife Magdalena Evangelio; children Joseph, Rafael, Thaddeus, Benedict, Erma and Johanna, daughters-in-law Cristy, Josie and Vanessa, siblings Francisco (†), Emiliano Jr., Jose, Lourdes, Antonio and Manolo, grandchildren, other relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul

His body lies in state at the Basilica of the Immaculate Conception, Batangas City.

Interment will be in the morning of May 2, 2003.

SANTIAGO "Badjie" M. CASTRO, JR.

Peacefully joined our Creator
on April 27, 2003 at the age of 47

A loving husband to his wife Resty; responsible father to his children and children-in-law Sarah & Mike, Joy, Nicky & Janice, and Mark and a sweet "Papa" to his granddaughter Angel Athena. One of the funeral directors of La Funeraria Paz, Inc. who have served the company for 18 years.

His body lies in state at Imperial Chapel of La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Cremation will take place on
Thursday, May 1, 2003 after the
8:00 a.m. Mass at La Funeraria Paz
Crematory.

MOM, YOU ARE DEARLY MISSED BUT YOU'LL
STAY FOREVER IN OUR HEARTS!

FE R. ACEBEDO

August 11, 1932 - April 30, 2001
On her 2nd Death Anniversary

Loving husband Mike; daughters, Grace, Gigi, Tiny; son,
Jojo & Joey and relatives request the readers to pray for eternal
repose of her soul.

Masses will be offered at the following:

Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene 9:00 a.m.
Shrine of Jesus, The Way, The Truth & The Life 5:30 p.m.
Nuestra Sra. De Guadalupe 12:15 p.m.
Our Lady of Remedies 7:00 a.m.

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Procurement Service

INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) invites G-EPIS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF BOND AND COPY PAPER FOR THE PS Stacks.

The approved budget for this contract is P14,786,500.00.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on May 13, 2003, 1:30 PM, Tuesday, at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St. Paco, Manila.

The bid documents shall be available at the PS-PURCHASING DIVISION starting April 30, 2003 upon payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (P1,500.00).

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the ABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on May 29, 2003 at 1:30 P.M. Thursday.

For more information, please call the PS-Purchasing Division at telephone nos. 563-94-02 or 563-93-74.

PS reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PS further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI - April 30, 2003)



Republic of the Philippines
Procurement Service

INTER-AGENCY BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The PROCUREMENT SERVICE (PS) invites G-EPIS registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF MECHANICAL STAMPING MACHINE for the Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR).

The approved budget for this contract is P2,250,000.00.

All interested parties are invited to attend the Pre-Bid Conference that will be held on May 13, 2003, 9:30 A.M. Tuesday, at the PS Conference Room, 2nd Floor, PS Complex, Cristobal St. Paco, Manila.

The bid documents shall be available at the PS-PURCHASING DIVISION starting April 30, 2003 upon payment of non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00).

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished eligibility requirements, technical and financial proposals in three separate sealed envelopes at the bid box located at the Office of the Head of the ABAC Secretariat at the above mentioned address. Deadline for submission and opening of bids shall be on May 29, 2003 at 9:30 A.M., Thursday.

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(Sgd.) EDUARDO P. OPIDA
Chairman, IABAC

(PDI - April 30, 2003)



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John braves SARS fear, goes to Canada to be with Vanessa

DESPITE the SARS scare in Canada, John Estrada left the country during Holy Week to be with his lady love, Vanessa del Bianco, in Toronto.

Vanessa returned to Canada after the Bureau of Immigration listed her as an "illegal alien" for working in the Philippines without a permit. Although Vanessa has Filipino roots, she is a Canadian citizen.

John has never admitted any romantic relationship with Vanessa, who is said to be the cause of the breakup of his 10-year marriage to Janice de Belen. But when he appeared on a recent episode of "Sharon," John defended Vanessa, who has been getting bad press despite her absence in local show biz. He pleaded with some writers to please stop involving Vanessa in the "sins" he has committed.

"She is a very nice person," John said on Sharon's show. "She doesn't deserve this."

John is expected to be back this week to resume his hosting chores on ABS-CBN's noontime show "Masayang Tanghal, Bayan" and taping for the soap "Kay Tagal Kitang Hinumay."

For John's own safety and also for the safety of his co-workers in the network, he should be subjected to a quarantine test before he starts working.

Vanessa is said to be making hay in Toronto as a commercial model. She recently clinched a

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Leah Salterio

contract for a shampoo commercial and she is on huge billboards all over the city.

Not quarantined

AN ABS-CBN employee sent me a text message saying members of the network staff have been complaining why not all personnel who covered the death of SARS victim Adela Catalan in Alcala, Pangasinan were quarantined, contrary to what ABS-CBN vice president for news Luchi Cruz-Valdez told the Inquirer (Entertainment, April 27, 2003).

The employee said some members of the production crew are still reporting for work "and perhaps spreading germs."

Valdez said reporters Doris Bigornia and Dindo Amparo, as well as the production crew and even drivers of the van which went to Alcala, were all quarantined.

Meanwhile, the hospital where Catalan was confined was Villasis Polymedic Hospital and Trauma Center.

Sex for 10 hours

JOEY Marquez's "S-Files" co-

hosts Richard Gomez, Paolo Bediones and Janice de Belen were teasing him last Sunday about Kris Aquino's earlier comment on how often she has sex. Kris had said on nationwide TV that she does it three times a day. Her remark was reported in this column last Sunday (April 27, 2003).

Joey said he only does it once a week, "but for 10 hours."

On TV last Monday, Kris said her statement "was taken out of context."

But she added, "In the context of a happy married life, why not (sex three times a day)?"

Not ABS-CBN's idea

PATRICIA Daza-Planas, ABS-CBN director for corporation affairs and public relations, wrote in reaction to the lead item on this column last Sunday about Martin Nievera being "very bitter" at ABS-CBN for "milking" his concert with Pops Fernandez at the Araneta Coliseum. The show was aired as a two-part special on the network on April 20 and 27.

Daza stressed that ABS-CBN does not wish to take advantage of any artist. The network entered into an agreement with the concert producer, Maxi-Media International, to air the Araneta Coliseum concert on ABS-CBN.

"The live concert ran for three hours and it was Felix Co, owner-producer of Maxi-Media, who requested ABS-CBN to air it as a two-part special, so the show would remain intact," Daza explained. "If ABS-CBN aired the concert in only one evening, as originally planned, large portions of the show would have been removed in order to fit into the time slot. It was not ABS-CBN's intention to 'milk' the event, but it was actually an accommodation of Maxi-Media's request that the concert be aired as a two-part special."

'Madame Ratsa'

SURFING the channels Friday



"VERY NICE" is how he describes Vanessa del Bianco.

night, I came across the late-evening show, "Ratsada Balita," hosted by the gutsy Baby de Jesus on RPN 9. De Jesus, more popularly known as "Madame Ratsa," is not your usual talk show host who merely tackles issues and gives commentaries. She can be mean, hard-hitting and fearless.

Last Friday, she lashed out at Meralco for increasing the Purchase Power Adjustment (PPA) again, without the knowledge of most consumers and in the absence of a Supreme Court decision on the public's complaints.

"Bising-bising tayo sa SARS at sa giyera sa Iraq, kaya pinagsamantalhan tayo ng Meralco para itaas na naman ang PPA," De Jesus barked.

She said Meralco should return the people's money which went to the PPA.

"Hindi kami tanga, bobo o utata," De Jesus said. "Huwag ninyo kamang pagloloakahan."

De Jesus is also amusing, especially when she blurts out her one-liners. She is entertaining, too. Last Friday, she did an entire show in a studio that had no air conditioning, yet she even danced before the cameras to the tune of the "Ketchup Song."

When she read a fan mail from a priest who commended her pro-



FEARLESS John Estrada should also be quarantined when he comes home.

gram, De Jesus was ecstatic. "Ayan, may isa na akong fan," she gushed.

Yesterday, she started her daily show, "Madame Ratsa, Live," which runs right smack into the noontime programs "Eat Bulaga" and "Masayang Tanghal, Bayan."

"Naku, ako ang ilalaban ninyo sa kanila?" she told her production crew. "Anong gusto ninyong

gawin ko, tumulay sa alambre?" "Madame Ratsa Live," which also carries De Jesus' trademark commentary and hard-hitting style, is a welcome alternative to noontime programming. If viewers get tired of watching those contests on the noontime show, they can switch channels and be entertained as well by Madame Ratsa.

THE LAUGHTER STARTS ON MAY 7!

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Steve Martin

Queen Latifah

Bringing down the House



Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

Nina in 'Coldwar' with Kyla at Ratsky



SOUL SIREN. Nina is the current toast of the local music scene.

MUSIC scene's current toast, Nina, whose angelic voice breathed life to the smash hit, "Jealous,"

takes center stage opposite fellow artist Kyla in a concert, "Coldwar," April 30, 8:30 p.m. at Ratsky Bar and Restaurant in Tomas Morato, Que-

zon City.

Nina, whose petite frame is easily defied by her powerful voice, belongs to the new school of R&B, characterized by bouncy, hip tunes, smooth, soulful melody and lyrics that at times can be stark simple, but heartrending as well.

Though relatively new in the local music scene, Nina lays claim to an album, "Heaven," which has earned raves, heavy airplays for the debut single and brisk sales enough to reach the gold record status soon.

She glided to the hearts and consciousness of listeners via the haunting strains of "Jealous," which skyrocketed to the hit charts.

As she made her entry into the music scene, Nina was readily baptized with the title "Soul Siren."

For inquiries about "Coldwar" the concert, call 374-1055 or 0917-8100975.

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Adam Sandler, Jack Nicholson offer non-stop laughs in fun, new comedy

In the No. 1 comedy in America, Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson star together for the first time as patient and therapist - though at times it's hard to tell which one is which!

After a misunderstanding aboard an airplane, mild-mannered Dave Buzznik (Sandler) is ordered to attend anger management sessions run by outrageous psychiatrist Dr. Buddy Rydell (Nicholson).

Tortured by Buddy's wacky and abrasive confrontational methods, Dave must decide whether to crawl back into his shell or stand up for himself, and keep his girl (Marisa Tomei) along the way.

With surprise appearances by top celebrities.

SECOND WEEK!

Selling Trumpets shows: The business of show business

By Butch Jimenez
Contributor

THERE is indeed no business like show business!

Show business is one huge roll of the dice. It's hard to predict the next big hit, the next star, or the latest entertainment craze. That's why we in Trumpets have always made it a point to present musicals that are not only excellent artistically but also make business.

The business model of a Trumpets production has always been based on partnerships with block buyers who buy a full show at a discounted rate and sell the tickets with the objective of earning a profit. This partnership allows Trumpets to widen its audience base as well as help groups and institutions raise funds for their own noble objectives.

The first question a budding businessman usually asks is, how big are the risks in such a venture? Though every business has its risks, Trumpets has devised a scheme to minimize the risks of losses and to provide the block buyer with varied sources of revenues to help ensure a return.

Depending on the play dates, Trumpets sells its shows for as low as P360,000 to as much as P410,000. If a block buyer is able to sell all his tickets, he stands to earn a gross of about P608,000, or a net income of anywhere between P198,000 and P248,000. This represents a return of investment of anywhere between almost 50 and 70 percent for about two months of ticket selling.

Souvenir program ads

Aside from just ticket sales, a block buyer is also given the option to sell souvenir program ads. There are buyers who use this scheme to cover the cost of the show itself. One fund raising group was able to solicit more than P400,000 worth of souvenir program ads, which made the revenue from ticket sales simply gravy for their organization.

Another possible source of revenue for a Trumpets block buyer is sponsorships. After securing the major sponsors for the run, Trumpets allows block buyers to also secure sponsorships not only for their own block-buyer's night but for the whole run. Block buyers get a significant share of the revenue from the sponsors they bring in, which adds to their total income.

To help block buyers sell tickets, Trumpets backs up its major productions with a strong tri-media campaign. Extensive promotional efforts are done through television, radio, billboards and print advertising as well as "on-the-ground" events.

Tickets are reasonably priced. While other musicals sell their tickets for as much as P1,500 each, Trumpet's next musical production will get you a premium seat for half that amount of P750.

After a string of box office hits like "Joseph the Dreamer," "The Lion The Witch and The

Wardrobe" and "Little Mermaid," Trumpets will present "Honk!" which won as best musical over "The Lion King" in the 2000 Lawrence Olivier Awards in London.

Positive values

"Honk!" is a modern adaptation of the beloved tale, "The Ugly Duckling," which stresses that true beauty is from within.

The 2003 Trumpets production of "Honk!"

features Franco Laurel and Carlo Orosa who'll be sharing the role of "Ugly," Carla Martinez, Agot Isidro who is making her stage debut, comedian Nanette Inventor and Sheila Francisco, fresh from her critically acclaimed performance as Bloody Mary in London's "South Pacific," Lana Jalosjos, stage veterans Noel Rayos and Tompet Gaba, as well as fast rising Paolo Valenciano.

Trumpets' "Honk!" runs at the Meraico

Theater from August to September.

If you're looking for a vehicle on positive values for the whole family as well as a means to raise funds for your own worthy cause, check out this year's Trumpets production, "Honk!"

Trumpets also welcomes sales agents who can earn commissions selling shows. Interested parties may call Trumpets Sales Department at 633-5010, 633-4387, 635-478.



THE AUTHOR

MPAA RATING > PG 13 | Children below 13 years old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

THE TIME HAS COME
FOR THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT
TO STAND UNITED.

X-MEN 2

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BUSINESS

Beijing faces negative growth due to SARS

BEIJING is likely to record its first negative growth in gross domestic product (GDP) in more than half a century this year if the outbreak of atypical pneumonia drags on, according to a report.

The report, compiled by the China Economic Research Center and the Health Policy and Administration Studies Center of Peking University, forecast that economic losses in this capital city may go up to 60 billion yuan (\$7.25 billion).

Even based on a conservative estimate, the capital city's GDP growth may dive to zero from

12.7 per cent in the first quarter of this year, the report said.

Beijing-based China Business Times cited the report as saying yesterday that the impact from severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) may cut the city's tourism revenues alone by about 40 billion yuan (\$4.83 billion).

Since last month, the number of overseas visits to Beijing, one of the hardest-hit areas by the flu-like epidemic, has dived by 80 per cent.

If indirect losses are included, the total economic losses may

reach as high as 60 billion yuan (\$7.25 billion) in Beijing, the report concluded.

Due to the local government's poor response to the disease outbreak at the initial stage, the number of SARS cases has been growing rapidly over the past week to reach 1,199, with 59 deaths, as of 10 am yesterday.

A recent poll has suggested that the negative impact of SARS has already moved beyond the tourism sector to strike more domestic consumption-driven industries such as catering, railway

transportation, airlines, retail, entertainment and even mobile communications business.

These industries have begun to feel mounting pressure from the epidemic outbreak although many economists agree that the overall national economic growth will suffer little substantial impact.

"Our business cannot be worse," said taxi-driver Zhang, who was waiting in a long queue of taxis for business yesterday at Beijing West Railway Station.

Zhang said he earned only less than 100 yuan (\$12.1) the whole

day on Sunday, in stark contrast with a daily average of up to 250 yuan (\$30.2) in normal days.

As more and more residents choose to stay at home in a bid to reduce the risk of being infected, the capital city's more than 50,000 taxi drivers like Zhang are expecting a hard time.

For Zhang and most of his colleagues, even earning enough to pay the monthly car rent of 3,500 yuan (US\$433) is becoming a mission impossible this month.

On Sunday, the Beijing Municipal Taxi Administration asked lo-

cal taxi companies to cut car rent by 200 yuan (\$24) per week to ease their financial burden.

"We appreciate the government's effort, but I'm afraid the rent reduction is too little to offset our losses," Zhang said. The taxi driver said the number of passengers to Beijing has seen a sharp decrease since April 20 when the official tally of SARS case was revised to 339 from 37.

Sales of Beijing's 750 railway ticket agencies have seen a fall of more than 30 per cent since late March. *Asia News Network*

US, Japan have worst aid policies, index says

WASHINGTON—Japan and the United States, the world's two richest countries, are at the bottom of the heap in terms of good development policies, put to shame by smaller and less wealthy counterparts, a new study has found.

The Netherlands topped the new index as the most development friendly rich country, followed by Denmark and Portugal. None of the group of seven leading industrial countries made it into the top five.

Japan ranks bottom out of the 21 rich countries, with the United States taking second to last place.

"Japan's poor performance in the foreign aid and migration categories help consign it to last place," according to a statement from the authors, the Center for Global Development and Foreign Policy magazine.

The index lists the countries based on their dedication to policies helping the 5 billion people living in poorer nations worldwide.

The ranking takes into account the size of aid budgets as well as openness to developing country exports, performance in peacekeeping, investment, migration and environmental policies.

It also penalizes financial assistance to corrupt regimes and policies that harm shared environmental resources.

Although the United States is the best country for the openness of its trade policies, it comes nearly last in the index because of poor marks in environmental policy and tied aid. *Reuters*

Citigroup open to new ventures

NEW YORK—Citigroup Inc., which has banking operations in more than 150 countries, is amenable to further foreign deals as it continues to diversify globally, the head of its international group said on Monday.

"We will continue to respond to attractive acquisition opportunities," Deryck Maughan, Citigroup vice chairman and chief executive of its international unit, said at UBS Warburg's financial services conference in Manhattan.

Citigroup's last big foreign purchase came in 2001, when it agreed to buy Grupo Financiero Banamex-Accival, then Mexico's No. 2 bank, for \$12.5 billion.

If Citigroup were approached by a profitable bank that could add value through its geographic positioning and banking product portfolio, "we would welcome it into the family," Maughan said.

"The more products, the more countries, the more secure we feel," he said.

Maughan said the bank wants to focus on nine key markets for growth: Hong Kong, Singapore, India, Germany, the United Kingdom, Poland, Japan, Taiwan and Brazil. Citigroup sees opportunities in both commercial banking and corporate and investment banking, he said.

Investors were concerned with the effect of SARS—the potentially deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome—which has been affecting parts of Asia and is seen as hitting the economies of the region.

"I don't view it as a material economic event, not yet," said Maughan, adding that predicting the future of the virus was a job for scientists.

Citigroup's Salomon Smith Barney investment banking arm and nine other firms were part of a landmark \$1.4 billion settlement with market regulators that was finalized on Monday.

Securities watchdogs had accused the banks of misleading investors by issuing biased stock research designed to win investment banking business.

Maughan declined to comment on the settlement, which was announced during his lunchtime speech, but he said the bank will adhere to global standards.

"These are global markets and we believe they have global applications," he said. *Reuters*

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 - Microsoft software
 - Windows XP Home Edition
 - Microsoft Office XP Standard Edition
 - Microsoft software games

2nd PRIZE: Watersports Package

- Aqua adventure to Bohol Beach Club for 3
- Roundtrip plane tickets for 3
- P30,000.00 worth of Nike products
- P6,000.00 worth of Penshoppe swimwear
- One unit of Palm Zire

3rd PRIZE: Mall Spree Package

- Weekend stay at a 5 star hotel for 4
- P30,000.00 worth of Penshoppe products
- Free movie and Time Zone passes for 4
- P8,000.00 worth of Nike products
- One unit Palm Zire

WEEKLY PRIZES

- P2,000.00 worth of Nike products and P2,000.00 worth of Penshoppe products
- Instant freebies for every approved plan subscription:
- 1 month free (to be credited to the 2nd month billing)
- Free Level Up card with 1 month free on World Gaming
- Free/discounted NIIT web course



MECHANICS:

- Customer must avail or subscribe to PLDT Vibe Plan. Subscription can be done via the following options:
 - Call 171.
 - On-line application to www.pldtvibe.com
 - Visit to any PLDT Business Office.
 Approved new plan subscribers get the following instant freebies:
 - Plan 20 (20 consumable hours, P550/mo):
 - 1 month free (to be credited to the 2nd month billing)
 - 1 free Level Up starter CD with one month Oz World free gaming
 - Free NIIT basic web course
 - Plan 45 (45 consumable hours, P1100/mo):
 - 1 month free (to be credited to the 2nd month billing)
 - 1 free Level Up starter CD with one month Oz World free gaming
 - Free NIIT basic web course
- New plan subscribers instantly get computer-generated raffle entry/tickets to the Gadgets and Gimmicks promo. Number of raffle entry/tickets depend on the plan type availed:
 - Plan 20 - 1 raffle entry
 - Plan 45 - 1 raffle entry

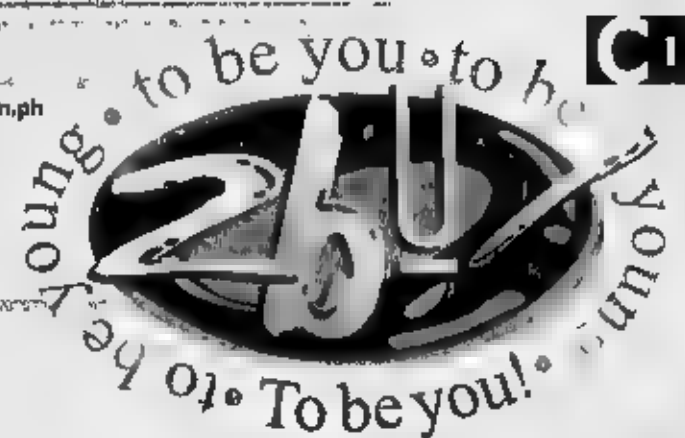
- New and existing subscribers (Post Paid Plan and Pay-Per-Surf) may increase their Vibe entry/tickets by referring friends to subscribe to PLDT Vibe Plan. They just have to log on to www.pldtvibe.com, click on the icon that will link them to referral page. They have to put in their friend's name, e-mail address and PLDT phone number. Every approved online referral earns them an additional Vibe entry.
- Only entries received until May 30, 2003, 7:00pm are qualified to join.
- Raffle entries will be drawn electronically. Draw will be held in PLDT's Main Office in Ramon Cuyugan Bldg., Orla Road corner Makati Avenue, Makati City in the presence of a DRI representative.
- There will be five weekly draws and a grand draw scheduled as follows:

April 28 (Monday)	1st weekly draw
May 5 (Monday)	2nd weekly draw
May 12 (Monday)	3rd weekly draw
May 19 (Monday)	4th weekly draw
May 26 (Monday)	5th weekly draw
May 31 (Saturday)	Grand Draw

- Prize-winning entries per draw still qualify for the succeeding weekly draws and grand draw.
- An applicant can only win once in a draw. If a name wins more than once, he gets the bigger prize.
- Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
- All prizes are tax free.
- GMA winners may claim their prize from PLDT's Marketing Services at the 5th floor of Ramon Cuyugan Bldg., Orla Road corner Makati Avenue, Makati City. To claim the prizes, they must present valid ID and notification letter. For provincial winners, PLDT will send their respective prizes to their address via courier.
- Gift certificates are valid for one (1) year from date of issuance.
- Redemption period for the prizes will be 60 days from notification.
- Prizes not claimed after 60 days will be forfeited.

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor

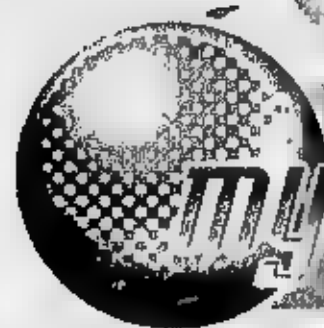


Halo-halo for SUMMER

Wave after wave, we take you from shore to shore, from an interview with Yuen Wo-Ping, the martial arts master behind 'The Matrix' and 'Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon,' and a conversation with Sugar Free vocalist Ebe Dancel, to fashion

options for the wardrobe-challenged and soulful food to help you reach blissful culinary heaven. Plus features on summer flings, summer classes, alternative ways to party, new albums, music videos, breakthroughs in wireless technology, great summer reads

and a look at how other young people are spending this blistering summer. Surfs up! There's something for everyone in this sizzling issue



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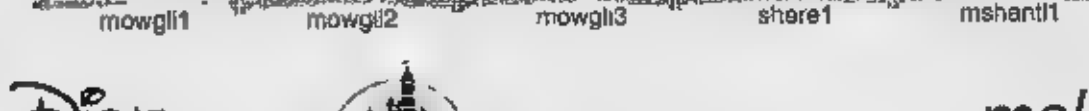
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SONG TITLE

Colonel Hathi's March
I Wanna Be Like You
My Own Home
That's What Friends are For
The Bare Necessities
Trust In Me
Jungle Rhythm

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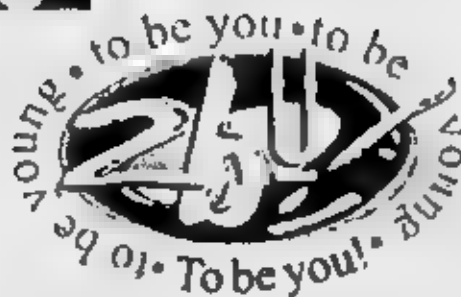
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MTRCB Rating (G)

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HANDYPHONE



summer reading list

By Zane Ronquillo
Contributor

IT'S summer alright. Everybody's excited to hit the country's famous beaches. And while your working on that golden tan, why not work on getting the hottest year-round accessory as well, an enviable mind. Don't forget to catch up on your favorite reads during this well-deserved break. Remember, a sensible and intelligent person is always sexy. We rounded up a few of our fellow youth readership advocates to give you their recommended summer reads—perfect for those breezy afternoons, lying in a hammock and sipping cold lemonade.

Arnold Arre, "After Eden" author and artist (Adarna House):

1. "Einstein's Dreams" by Alan Lightman

Definitely my all-time favorite! It romanticizes Einstein's theory of relativity and shows how time and space can be unpredictable, oftentimes frightening, yet altogether beautiful.

2. "Goodbye Chunky Rice" by Craig Thompson

This one of a kind graphic novel explores a heartwarming tale about love, friendship and coping with loss. Told in a unique way that only sequential art can.

3. "Dune" by Frank Herbert

This sweeping fantasy epic is the only piece of literature I know that can rival Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" and Asimov's "The Foundation Series."

4. "The Third Wave" by Alvin Toffler

For you teenagers, this is a must-read if you want to survive and make sense out of all the chaos happening in our civilization today. It explains in simple language how society evolves and how the seemingly small events in history can change the world forever.

5. "Box Office Poison" by Alex Robinson

Halfway into this funny and witty 500-page graphic novel, you'll feel like you've known the characters all your life. Aside from all the sex, friendship, love and betrayal issues it tackles, it really is the story of how artists can overrun the mechanical corporate monstrosities that bound our society. Feel-good all around.

6. "The Narnia Chronicles" by CS Lewis

Way before Harry Potter, The Narnia Chronicles had already explored the world of the fantastic. It still never fails to give that sense of childlike wonder with each reading. A good gift for a loved one, young and old.

Bernie Sum, MTV Ink writer and illustrator:

1. "Second Hand" by Michael Zadoorian

For anyone and everyone who's been bitten by the ukay/bargain hunting bug. Like the cool junk we covet, this delightful fiction makes you think about what people should really value.

2. "Welcome to Temptation" by Jennifer Cruise

I've graduated from reading three-inch thick trashy romance novels in high school, but I still can't resist picking one up occasionally, especially if they're as funny and sexy as Jennifer Cruise's work. The contemporary plots are a gazillion kingdoms away from Cinderella fantasies, the babes are neurotic, and the hunks are sometimes pricks.

"Welcome to Temptation" is one of my favorite low brow novels, and not just because it's got porn in it.

3. "The Passion of Artemisia" by Susan Vreeland

I picked this one up because I am a female artist myself. Artemisia Gentileschi is one of the greatest artists of 17th century Italian Baroque, the first ever female painter who made a living by her brush, and whose horrific rape trial was the first ever documented. Susan's fictional account nevertheless shows us a determined and passionate woman who was courageous enough to gun for what she wants in life, especially in such a masochistic environment.

4. "Happy Endings" by Luis Joaquin Kangbak

Beguiling and whimsical, these short stories of love and life by Palanca

awardee Luis Kangbak never fails to bring a smile to my face. It's always a thrill to re-discover them, even after college.

5. "Emily the Strange" by Cosmic Debris

A visual treat for little deviants everywhere. I'm a big fan of Emily and her acid brand of nastiness (it's placed right beside my copy of Jessica Zafra's "Chicken Pox for the Soul"). If you're

someone who's as eccentric as "Wuthering Heights" Emily the Strange Bronte, you'd be up to no good too.

6. "(Ang) Kulas-kulas"

Pakilipagsapalaran ni Zsazsa Zarnah" by Carlo Vergara

In his debut novel, Brian Ascalon Roley paints a dark picture of two Pil-Am brothers growing up in California. Gabe tries very hard to steer away from the gang lifestyle that his brother Tomas has chosen. He runs from home, hoping to escape his past and his heritage. But fleeing only brought him closer to a destiny that continues to spiral downward.

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Una and Miguel is a funnier, fresher take-on-an-old-plot-popular boy, outcast girl. The dialogues are nasty and laugh-out-loud funny. Siring's All the Right Moves is a choose-your-own-romance book. It is one helluva ride.

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where forest fires and thunderstorms are ordinary, it is not totally alarming when kids start getting struck by lightning during soccer practice. Paul's heroic stand for his passion, alongside other vividly drawn characters make "Tangerine" a riveting read with tight plotlines and an exhilarating revelation at the end.

5. "Stardust" by Neil Gaiman

Famous for his award-winning "Sandman" series, Neil Gaiman weaves a mesmerizing tale of a mythical quest for love. Tristan Thorn falls in love with the haunting beauty Victoria Forrester, but it is not enough. She promises to marry him if he brings her a star. Tristan ventures into the faerie world and finds a young woman with a broken leg, who turns out to be the star he was looking for. Everything in Gaiman's world is unanticipated: talking trees, humanoid stars, immortal hunters, and a love that defies time.

6. "American Son" by Brian Ascalon Roley

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get who) said that reading her poems is like catching a bullet with your teeth. But one needs to get past the suicidal angry feminist label and recognize that it is her poetry and not her confession which she did exceptionally well.

6. "Lolita" by Vladimir Nabokov

One of the best novels ever written, it's also Nabokov's most controversial. Humbert Humbert, an aging European intellectual is in love and in pursuit of Lolita, an adolescent nymph. The first line never fails to reel readers in: "Lolita, love of my life, fire of my loins." It's a delicious meditation on love, desire and madness.

Humbert's all-consuming desire and depravity written in Nabokov's delicious and feverish prose left me stunned and shaken.

Reading this book is to surrender oneself into the hands of a master.

Clarissa Concio, MTV INK managing editor:

1. "Coraline" by Neil Gaiman

I never had boring summers, even if I stayed at home because I always tried to explore and look for new things to do. Coraline is a story about a girl who did just that and, in the process, realized that sometimes, things and people need not be complicated, exciting and "different" to be special. (Besides, it's Neil Gaiman. You can't go wrong with Gaiman.)

2. "Lenore" by Roman Dirge

If there's anything or anyone who can be both dead and extremely cute at the same time, then Lenore is it. Fun, easy, gory reading about a pretty, witty, dead girl and her strange "posse" of gross friends.

3. "1001 Arabian Nights"

A great book to bring along with you during trips. It's one loooooong story pieced together by short, entertaining tales. And, despite what most people may think because of the adaptations of the stories in Arabian Nights for kids' books (Aladdin, Ali Baba and the forty thieves), the original Arabian Nights contains lots of violence.

4. "The Silmarillion" by J.R.R. Tolkien

For nerds who don't want their brains to remain stagnant during the summer break, J.R.R. Tolkien's The Silmarillion provides days of geek fun. The book tells of the beginnings of middle earth, as well as a history of its different races of people. Be ready with a notebook and pen-note-taking highly recommended. Also includes Arwen and Aragorn's love story.

5. "MTV INK"

Funny features, interesting pieces on the hottest musicians and artists, lousa cool stuff and freebies, Magic Eye...who could ask for more in a mag?

Pierre Palacios, WWF Philippines communications officer

I usually read magazines that relate to my line of work.

1. "Mac User"

This magazine is a great source for Mac users. It features all the latest from Macintosh and offers great tips from digital imaging, sound production, graphic design, etc. It also gives freebies once in a while.

2. National Geographic Magazine

My dad used to subscribe Nat Geo way back in the '70s and '80s. I usually read all the back issues whenever I have the time. The articles are well written and insightful. The images are great too.

3. Any magazine on graphic design

I get design tips and ideas from these magazines.

4. "Dragonlance series"

I'm a big Fantasy/Adventure lover and I recommend the Dragonlance series. If you like The Lord of the Rings trilogy,

you will love this one. Start with the Legend of Huma (Herpes series) then follow it with the Chronicle series: Dragons of Auto Twilight, Dragons of Venter Night, Dragons of Spring Dawning.

Bastiaan Van de Loo, assistant political and cultural affairs, Netherlands Embassy

1. "The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order" by Samuel E. Huntington

Reading this book will give the reader a greater understanding of contemporary issues in the world: anti-Americanism, fundamentalism, and regionalism. Huntington explains this by giving a historical background and analyzing certain patterns in international relations that affect all of

2. "A Nation Under Fire" by Francisco Tatad

Since I am writing my master thesis on The Rise and Fall of Joseph Estrada, A Case Study of Philippine Politics, I came along this book. It gives a very good insight of the Estrada impeachment trial. Although Tatad is not objective, this book provides, a different and important perspective on ED-SAU.

3. "Under the Crescent Moon. Rebellion in Mindanao" By Marites Danguilan Vitug & Glenda M. Gloria

This was part of the literature I read while studying at the University of Hawaii under Prof. Wurfel and Prof. Belinda Aquino. In my daily conversations with Filipinos I wonder whether they are aware of the background of

Hottest Iced Teas in town

By Mark Andrew F. Bonifacio
2bU! Correspondent

ICED tea is becoming as popular a beverage as sodas. In fact, it is fast becoming the preferred thirst-quencher of many people.

Can't have enough of iced tea? Check out some of the best and most refreshing iced teas in town.

Red Iced Tea

Tokyo Tokyo
P40

Yes, it is indeed red in color but it is not strawberry or cherry. What makes this iced tea special is the bubblegum and candy aftertaste. A heavy favorite among Tokyo Tokyo patrons, the Red Iced Tea, served with lemon wedge, would complete your Japanese meal. You can order it by the glass or plastic bottle.

Leaves of Grass

The Kitchen
P40

Who says tea and pandan can't go to-

gether? This refreshment, exquisitely flavored with pandan, would remind you at first of the famous Pinoy drink, sago at gulaman, only better. Served "bottomless," Leaves of Grass is recommended for those who prefer a Filipino-tasting iced tea.

Cool It!

The Kitchen
P40

True to its name, Cool It! is a delight for mint lovers. Also served "bottomless" like Leaves of Grass, this iced tea with mint can taste like toothpaste at first but as you sip it, you will be truly refreshed. The cool minty taste will make you feeling pampered.

Nestea Apple

P10

A refreshing treat especially for those who are always on the go, Nestea Apple truly captures the taste of apple. The calamansi-flavored is just as authentic-tasting. You won't have a hard time looking for this iced tea since it is available in cans from vendo machines. Recommended for those who are budget-conscious.

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Snapple (lemon and raspberry)

P23

If you don't want your iced tea too sweet, this one's for you. People with a sweet tooth may not appreciate it since it tastes a bit sour, making it distinct from other iced teas. You can feel a tingling sensation after drinking it (especially the Raspberry flavor). Available in glass bottles, Snapple's iced tea is perfect with desserts, as an alternative to coffee.

P24.20

Made of black tea, Soia Iced Tea comes in three flavors (lemon, peach and raspberry) and packed in a cute glass bottle. Sweet-tea lovers would have a grand time with this drink. Among the three flavors, peach is the best. Best drunk when cold (otherwise it tastes too sweet), Soia Iced Tea is ideal for snacks.

Lipton Lemon Bottled Iced Tea

P18.15

Lipton Bottled Iced Tea leads the pack among commercially available iced teas. Its right blend makes it pleasing to the taste buds and will leave you wanting

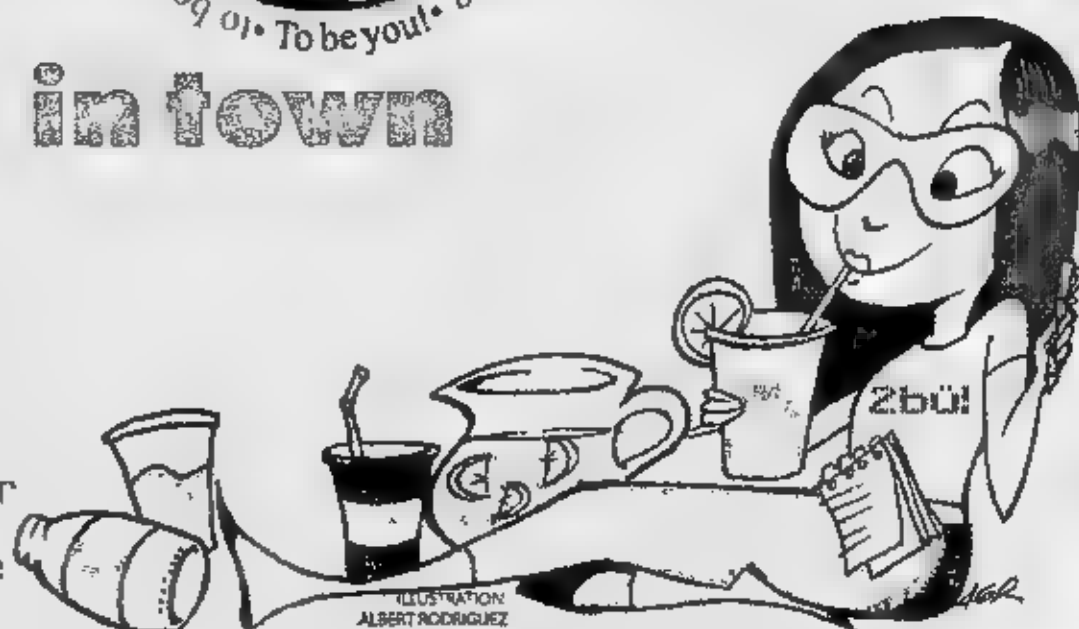
more.

Wendy's Iced Tea

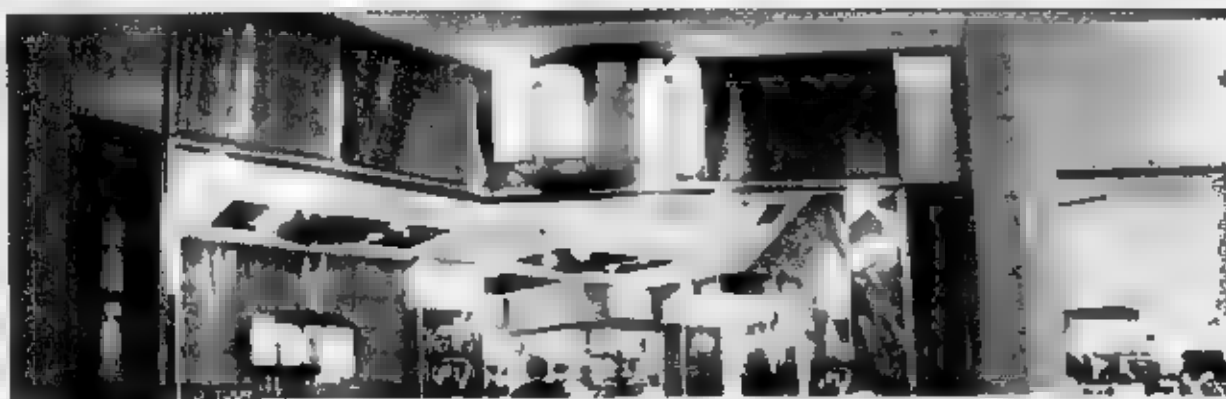
Biggie size: P 29

There is something about this iced tea that leaves you feeling cold and full afterwards. Whatever it is, a bacon cheeseburger, bacon mushroom melt, French fries or any other Wendy's meal would not be complete without its famous iced tea.

Blended with just the right amount of sweetness and lemon (or is it calamansi?), this iced tea truly makes a refreshing difference. Biggie size recommended.



Trendy and affordable fashion finds



HIP fashion store in Rockwell recently celebrated its first anniversary with a fashion fair at the North Court of Power Plant Mall.

All 14 establishments showcased the latest trends in fashion. Babo, Clad Shoppe, Don't Miss, Dtour, Lhasa, Limited and Mix Clothing exhibited outfits for today's trend setting and trend-conscious women. Dickies, Reverse and Underground showed off stitches for the cool guys. Janyin and Sote presented both funky and classic shoes. Funky Finds and Girl Shoppe offered the most hip accessories and cutest knick-knacks.

Globe Gentext co-presented this year's event. The focus of this anniversary celebration was to promote peace in the world and inculcate social awareness in today's youth. Part of the proceeds were donated to the Philippine Red Cross.

Lots of activities, promotions, freebies and discounts awaited Hip patrons and Gentext members. This groovy happening was also sponsored by O Music Video and Meg Magazine.

HIP is a cozy hub of stores at the second floor of Power Plant Mall in Rockwell Center.

memories so
valuable captured
at unbelievably great value



Memories as precious as diamonds are best captured in Gold. And as our special offer on our 75th Anniversary, we give you Kodak Gold films at even greater value. Also available in 24 exposure film at P79.00 and 12 exposure film at P66.00.

So as we celebrate our Diamond Year, celebrate the brilliance of life with Kodak Gold.

Share Moments. Share Life.™



Promo period is from April 1 to May 31, 2003.
Available in all Kodak film outlets nationwide.
Per DTI-NCR permit no. 1370 series of 2003.



Capturing the brilliance of life.

Comb Through Fabulous Summer Finds

at the Summer Bangketa Fair of Greenhills Shopping Center.

Don't get tangled in a time warp. Get a new look this summer at GSC's Summer Bangketa Fair. With over 1,000 stalls and extended shopping hours 'til 10 P.M. on Fridays and Saturdays, you'll surely find everything you need to look this summer's best.

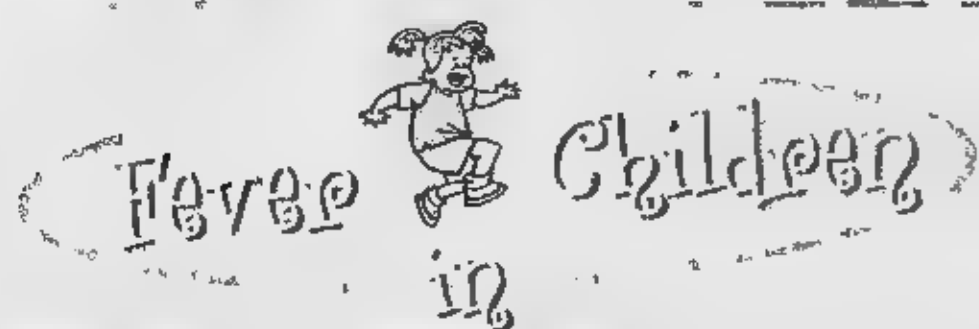


www.greenhills.com.ph



Philippine Pediatric Society, Inc.

I N F O B O X



Having a child with fever is an anxiety-provoking situation that many parents never want to experience. Fortunately, most of these episodes are due to minor illnesses. Since most children will suffer from fever at one time or another, it is very important for you to know what causes fever and what to do when your child has one.

What is fever?

You may feel that your child has a temperature that's warmer than usual. Does he have fever? It is important to remember that although the average normal body temperature is 37°C, it may vary among people. There is also a regular daily pattern that varies from person to person. Upon waking up in the morning, body temperature is at its lowest, and is highest in the late afternoon. Most children have a higher body temperature than adults and have more daily variations. Food, extra clothing, anxiety, and physical activity or exercise can lead to a temporary increase in temperature.

Most parents believe that fever is any temperature above the usual for their child. Although there is no exact definition of fever among doctors, a temperature of 37.8°C is generally considered as the beginning of a fever.



Medicating your child's fever

In children, the most common medicine used to relieve fever is paracetamol. It is given at a dose of 5-10 mg per kilogram of body weight every four hours. Infant drops is the concentrated preparation, which delivers medicine in a smaller amount. Each preparation will require a different dose, thus, always make sure that you are giving your child the right preparation and the right amount of medicine. If you are unsure of how much to give, ask your doctor.

To give a suspension, use a medicine cup or kitchen-measuring spoon. Also, make sure you shake the medicine bottle well before pouring the suspension onto the spoon.

When to consult your doctor

Although most of the time a child's fever is due to a minor illness, there are usually symptoms that can help explain where the fever is coming from: cough, colds, vomiting, and diarrhea. If the temperature has gone down and your child looks better, chances are he's out of danger. But since the height of fever or the response or lack of it to medication will not give a clue to the severity of the illness, there are several indications that will tell you that your child should be brought to the doctor:

- If your baby is less than three months old, do not hesitate to bring him in since fever in young infants can be an early warning sign of an infection.
- If your baby refuses to eat or drink less than the usual, dehydration can set in. Infants less than six months old are more vulnerable to this. Watch out for a decrease in diaper changes as a measure of dehydration.
- Even if your child is more than three months old, if a fever does not subside on the 2nd or 3rd day, consult a doctor.
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- Rashes, difficulty of breathing, pain or difficulty in urination, stiff neck, ear and abdominal pain indicate that you should consult your doctor.
- Anytime that you are uncomfortable with the way your child looks or acts, do not hesitate, consult your doctor.

What causes fever?

Once you are sure that your child has fever, it may mean a lot of things. That's because fever is not an illness in itself. It is a symptom of an illness, often from a viral or bacterial infection. It may also be secondary to an injection or a vaccination given to a child. Thus, fever is a sign, a form of warning, that your child's body is fighting the infection.

Is fever dangerous?

Fever makes your child's body unfavorable to the microbe or virus. Through the body's high temperature, fever impairs the ability of the harmful organism to replicate and even helps kill some viruses. What's more, the number of white blood cells that are responsible for killing both the microbes and the infected cells are similarly increased.

However, there is a very small number of children between the ages of three months to six years who will develop convulsions associated with an abrupt increase in temperature. This usually lasts for less than five minutes.

Treating your child's fever

Because fever is the body's normal response to infection, the main goal of treatment is to keep your child as comfortable as possible since the higher the temperature, the worse the child feels. The following should be done:

- Dress him in light clothes. Avoid heavy jackets and long sleeves.
- Keep him in a cool and quiet environment, and avoid undue stress.
- Give him lots of liquids—water or juices—frequently. Babies who are still breastfeeding should continue to breastfeed for comfort and rehydration.
- Carrying infants help them to sleep and feel better.
- If the temperature is 39°C or higher, sponge your child with water that is neither hot nor cold. Cold water is never recommended since it prevents the body from releasing extra heat. This will also cause your child to shiver. Alcohol baths or rubs should likewise be avoided. There is a risk of alcohol poisoning as alcohol can be absorbed through the skin.
- Sponge the limb one at a time until it feels cool to the touch. Dry limbs and tuck under a blanket. Proceed with the rest of the body and continue with the face and forehead.



How to measure body temperature

The standard for measuring body temperature is the glass thermometer.

ORAL: Oral temperature may be taken in older children who can hold the thermometer, without biting, under their tongues with their lips closed. The oral thermometer, which has a long bulb at the end, should be left inside the mouth for three minutes.

RECTAL: Rectal temperatures give the most accurate reading, and are best for babies younger than two months. To take the rectal temperature, the infant is placed on his back with knees bent towards the chest. The bulb end of the glass thermometer, lubricated with oil or petroleum jelly, is inserted into the anus 3/4 to 1 inch deep. It should be held in place for three minutes, withdrawn and read.

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Today, technology has offered new and easier ways to read body temperature such as the digital thermometer and the ear thermometer.

Tips on using the thermometer

- Shake the thermometer and allow the mercury to settle down before using it.
- Be sure that it is not cracked. If it is broken, do not touch the mercury with your hands. Use a tissue and dispose properly.
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- Never leave your child alone while taking his temperature.
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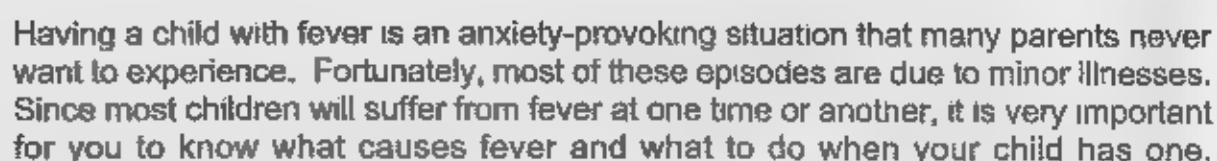
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Babies who are still breastfeeding
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Philippine Pediatric Society, Inc.

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What You Should Know About Biogesic for Kids

Finally, Biogesic for Kids is here to give your child delicious fever relief!

Biogesic, the #1 paracetamol brand Filipinos have trusted for more than 30 years, now comes in a suspension format for children. Because it's from Biogesic, moms can be sure it's safe and effective in relieving children's fever, aches, and pains.

Biogesic for Kids uses a breakthrough technology called **TasteRite**, which significantly reduces the bitter medicine taste of paracetamol so that children will taste Biogesic suspension's yummy flavor and not the medicine. So you won't have a hard time giving your child

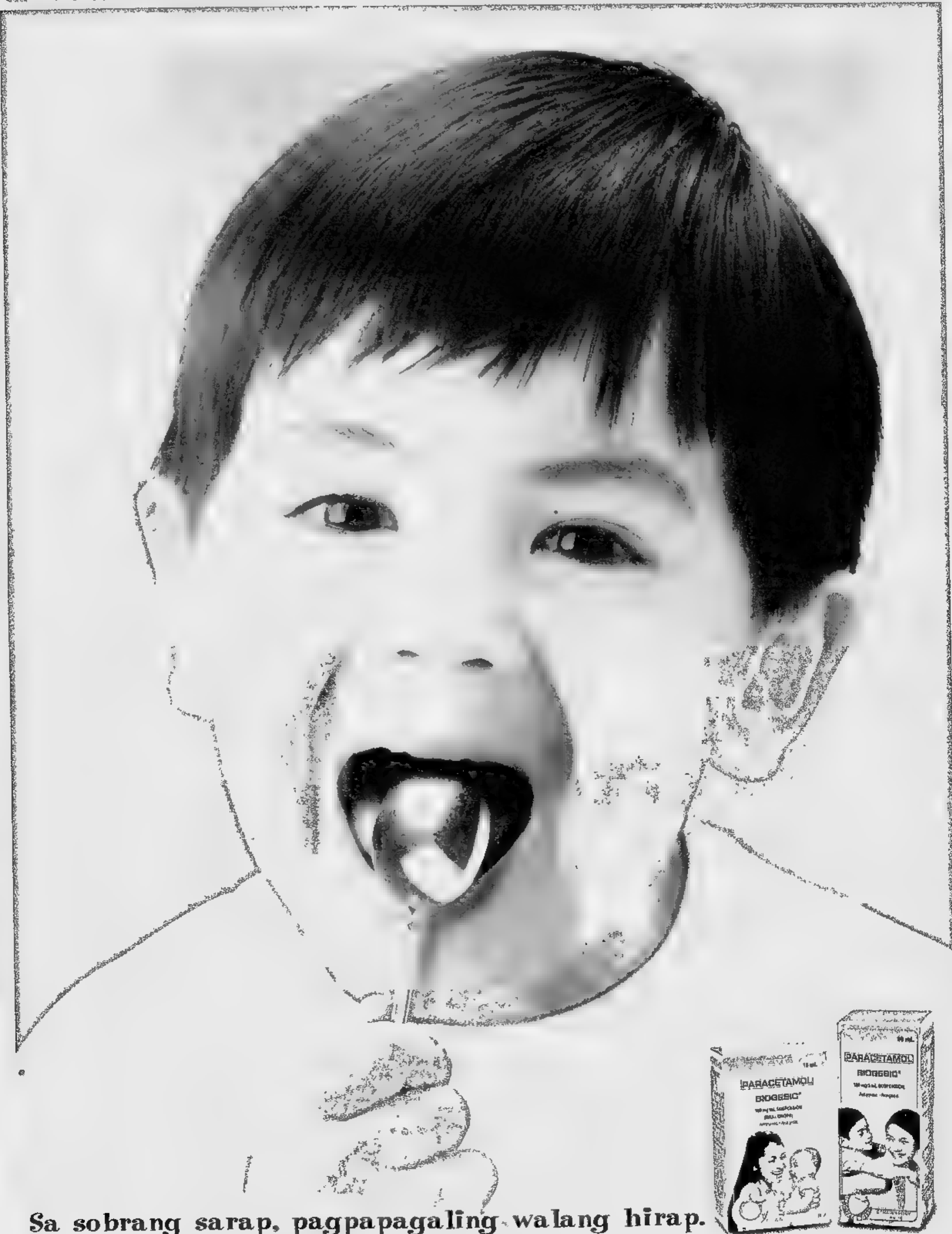
medicine, each and every time until his recovery from fever.

Biogesic for Kids is available in two delicious child-friendly flavors, orange and strawberry. It is also available in various dosage formats to suit children of all ages: 100 mg/mL infant drops, 120 mg/5 mL suspension for children 2-6 years old and 250 mg/5 mL suspension for children 7-12 years old.

Because your child's safety is your biggest priority, Biogesic for Kids comes in child-safe packaging—its heat-sealed

plastic bottles with safety lock caps will help prevent accidental drug ingestion.

With all these—the name, the technology, the taste, the formats, and the safe packaging—Biogesic for Kids remains affordable compared to other brands. Truly, Biogesic for Kids is the medicine your children will love, and you will trust! Ask your doctor about Biogesic for Kids now!



Sa sobrang sarap, pagpapagaling walang hirap.

Introducing Biogesic for Kids!

Ang pinagkakatiwalaan mong Biogesic, may Biogesic for Kids na para sa lagnat ng 'yong anak. At may **TasteRite** para ang yummy orange at strawberry flavors talagang magugustuhan niya. Siguradong tuloy-tuloy ang paggaling niya!



MOMMY!

PARACETAMOL
BIOGESIC
For kids

Ang sarap magpagaling ni mommy!



STRIPED AND SUNNY SENSATIONS. Kat and Nadja in citrus shades of summer

Rules of attraction

TELL-A-TUBBY. Nadja and Philip flirt in dangerous waters. All clothes and accessories by Rustan's U.



Text by Tim Yap
Photos by Victor Consunji

MET the characters of U College—a suburban liberal arts campus with headmaster Joel Tantoco of Rustan's at the helm.

Rustan's U is filled with quirky kids out to live their lives in the best way they know how. There's a small society just like yours and mine, where every person's life finds itself entangled with another's, resulting in scandal, mayhem and sophisticated comedy.

Enter Kat. A reluctant bright, young thing who tries to find her roots in miniskirts and tie-up sandals. Fabric is her language.

Enter Paolo. Beautiful and brooding, he has no idea why he is in a liberal arts college. Everybody loves him, but he has eyes only for Kat.

And this is when Nadja enters the picture. She is a poetess who is at a loss for words when it comes to Paolo, who doesn't even give a thought about her.

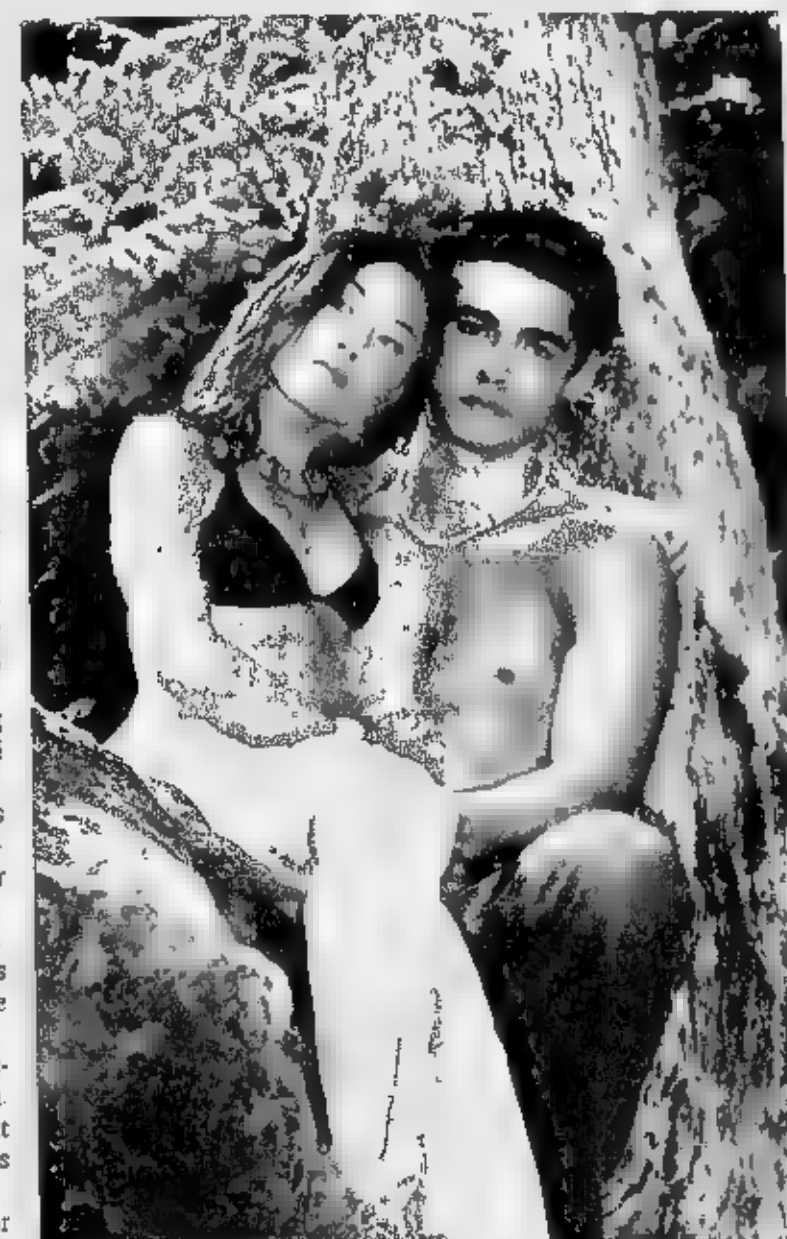
Enter Philip. A boy eternally on the crossroads, but never when it comes to fashion. Perfectly accessorized, he makes the perfect accessory. Nadja uses him, and he plays along.

Enter Jake. He has been kicked out a year before but still remains on campus to prey on unknowing freshmen.

As you can see, none of the above are exactly the most normal of personalities. But we don't care about them—we care about the story.

Enter Victor Consunji. You won't see him in this story, but he is the man behind the lens. In his way of seeing, every stifled ecstasy is exposed, every character is exposed, every man before us. His story is the most recent torture of the imagination.

As the story unfolds, more than words, but the story speaks for itself more.



ETCHED ON A TREE. Kat and Paolo, summer's freshest couple



SANDY SEDUCTION. Paolo and Kat in pensive states of dress and undress



WET, WET, WET. Nadja and Kat soak themselves in U bikinis, summer's must-haves



UP, UP, UP THE MOUNTAIN. Jake and Paolo hike onto the undiscovered trail in U men's light printed shirts

Prepare to bare, get a body scrub

By Jules Alcantara
2bU! Correspondent

SUN, Sweat, Sand.

The words could only mean one thing—it's summer once again.

With the sun at its fiercest (I sometimes wish I live in some remote part of Alaska), this is the perfect time to show some skin. Haltered tops, short shorts and short skirts are de rigueur.

It's time to don that itzy bitzy bikini and soak up some sun—with a generous heap of SPF-containing product slathered all over the body, of course. If your ultimate goal is to get a nice, even tan before the season is over, you need to slough off all the dead skin that makes for pasty, pale and uneven skin.

Normally, pre-beach preparation meant making "hilot" every part of the body that is accessible.

But nowadays, instead of the nice, flat stone or face towel or the "bimpo" for removing grime from the body, there are now a variety of choices such as hand glove scrubs, pumice stones and nets available in beauty shops and supermarkets. Just about every beauty brand carries some sort of body scrub.

The thing is, your arms can only go so far and there are portions of your body that are hard to reach. You need someone to remove stubborn dirt and grime.

For journalistic purposes and also because I needed cleansing, I decided to get a body scrub. If you plan to worship the sun or dare and be bare this summer, then body scrubs are a necessary luxury.

I tried two distinctly different

places that offered the same service. One is a clinic and the other a spa.

Belo Medical Group

Although technically a clinic, BMG has a spa-like atmosphere, with a very friendly staff. Nilda, my designated grime buster, briefly explained the procedure.

She asked me to take off my clothes and undergarments and put on disposable underwear. Although a little shy about going naked, I figured out that it was necessary.

When she told me she usually attended to an average of six to seven customers a day, I stopped worrying about my extra poundage.

I was asked to lie on my tummy and relax. Using generous amounts of salt-like grains that smelled like vanilla or honey, Nilda began to scrub the back of my legs and thighs, working all the way to the nape of my neck.

She spent some time on my back and derriere area, which she said were usually hard to reach.

Despite the brisk scrubbing, I felt so relaxed and peaceful. I found myself literally drooling.

By the time she exfoliated my arms and elbows, I had already surrendered myself to physical bliss.

She then asked me to lie on my back so she could work on the front portion of my body. I felt a little giddy when she worked on my feet, thinking I didn't need to go to the parlor for my regular foot scrub. Again she worked her way up to my knees, thighs, groin all the way up to my shoulders and neck.

You need
someone to
remove stubborn
dirt and grime

As she scrubbed my armpits, she said women of all ages, from teenagers to young matrons, always requested for extra attention in this area. One of the benefits of getting constant body scrubs is any discoloration in the armpit area is removed. I decided that the procedure was going to be money well spent.

A good 30 minutes was spent removing "libag" and other filth. I had never felt so scrubbed and buffed in my entire life. I then took a shower to remove all the salts. As I showered, my skin literally felt and looked shiny, smooth, not to mention, dewy.

No more rough, scaly skin! I felt like every part of my body was as smooth as a baby's bottom.

Nilda asked if I wanted a bleaching agent applied to my skin. The agent was natural and lotion-like, peroxide-free and made of grapefruit extract. Those wanting to get a tan this summer should probably skip this procedure but since I was not planning to hit the beach this summer, I asked her to go ahead.

(Belo Medical Group is located at 305 Tomas Morato corner Scout Madrinan, South Triangle, Quezon City. Call for an appointment at



ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

(02) 373-3355/(02) 373-4088

Urban Spa

With its interior design, you immediately realize that you are in for an hour of pampering the moment you enter the Urban Spa.

Marie, my attendant, also asked me to remove my clothes and to wear disposable underwear. Soothing music from Enya and the smell of herbal oil filled the room that I wanted to curl up and sleep. I was so comfortable I could barely hear Marie asking me to lie on my tummy.

A Dead Sea salt scrub was used to exfoliate dead skin and grime. Marie had a light touch, perfect if you are the sensitive type. Although if you prefer a little more

pressure, you can advise your attendant.

Marie constantly asked me if I wanted more pressure and I just bobbed my head in agreement. The slow, deliberate and unhurried movement from the back of my legs to the nape of my neck was sheer bliss. The scrubbing was a combination of scrub and massage which I fully appreciated since I just came from a long and tiring weekend.

Although I was conscious that I was being kneaded and scrubbed, the atmosphere was so relaxing that I almost succumbed to the call of Morpheus. I was jolted from my reverie when Marie started to scrub the soles of my feet. It was tickling that I giggled a lot!

Marie asked me to lie flat on my back so she could work on the front portion of my body. I must have dozed off then, only surfacing again when she woke me up and told me to rinse off.

As I rinsed off the salts, I felt so cleansed and relaxed at the same time. I couldn't wait to go home, put on my PJs and crawl into bed.

But the best was yet to come. Marie told me to lie on the bed again then she slathered honey all over my body to moisturize the skin. I was wishing I was in Boracay, sipping Piña Colada and enjoying a fantastic Swedish massage.

(Urban Spa is located at 5th Level, Shangri-La Plaza, tel. (02) 687 6196/(02) 687 6195. Call for an appointment.)

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If writing is your passion and meeting deadlines is a breeze for you, we invite you to become one of us.

First, tell us about yourself—who you are, what you do, what makes you tick. Tell us about your disastrous blind date, if you wish.

Then, choose from the following (or if you're feeling up to it, you can work on everything).

Write a movie, album, book or TV show review.

Make a profile of your fa-

vorite personality (He/she doesn't have to be someone we know.)

Impress us with a travelogue.

Write a feature story on something you think we should know about.

Please make sure each article is less than 500 words.

Send this, along with your other work samples (no poetry, please), to 2bu@inquirer.com.ph.

We will be accepting applications until May 7.



Eye-catching silver accessories

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three simply says to come across hip by adorning your face with a nose ring or piercing your eyebrow with skulls and cobras. A surefire way to catch anyone's eye during this sizzle spell.

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LIFESTYLE



2BU! SURVEY

What's the best thing that happened to you this summer?



MY best experience was when I played for a basketball summer league and unfortunately, we only played two games because after our last game, my teammates made a riot with the committees.—Jay

PHOTOS: GILES AQUINO



BEING with my family during the Holy Week. I didn't go to Boracay with friends. We went to seven different churches around the metropolis, like Christ the King, Edsa Shrine, Pinaglabanan Church, for the traditional Visita Iglesia. I had the chance to recollect my thoughts, thank God for all the blessings and, of course, repent for all my sins. This was very rare because I usually go out of town with friends during Holy Week.—Cheryl, 24

By Pam Pastor

SAME old TV shows, same old bed, same old pajamas day after day after day. If you think you've been wasting your summer away, find joy in the fact that it's not yet too late. You still have a month or so left. Get your butt moving, it's time for some action. Take your cue from these young people who have been having a blast. And remember, the best adventures are created out of nothing.

Watching the first three seasons of "Friends" with my girlfriend during the Holy Week.—Jugs, 24

I finally kissed school goodbye—for good.—Suburban Wit, 20

Making out with my ex-boyfriend! And mountain climbing with my cousins.—Ruthie

I learned how to drive.—Diego, 18

Little surprises that turn out really good... like having a newfound friend that makes me feel I'm worth a lot... and the release of the 1.5-liter bottle of Vanilla Coke! —Karl, 24

OJT interviews.—Randy Dee, 20, CSB

Watching "Anger Management" with some new friends.—JM, 20

Don't waste

your

vacation by

staying in

bed and

watching

TV all day.

It's time to

make

things

happen

Learning how to wakeboard and play golf. Since I'm not really athletic, for me it's a really cool summer experience.—Jam, 20

Diving with wild dolphins.—Jon-Jon Rufino, 28

Being the perfect bum!—Leidy

Went to *gunik* places in Antipolo in an owner-type jeep and wearing only 'pambahay'. It was so fun just being myself!—TG, 18

I went to Baguio on a whim.—Rosa, 26

Getting my first job! What a rush!—CJ

Playing at the Pulp Summerslam and sharing the experience with the one true love of my life, Karen. Falling in love again with the same woman with more passion than ever before.—Eurd, bass and vocals, Dakong Palay

I was able to make up for the loss of my social life since I got a day job.—Giles

Discovering the joys of being a bum.—Alex, 20

Getting ordained to the order of dea-

cons.—Gelo

I went to Boracay for the first time. I loved it.—Cely, 22

Rediscovering badminton.—Pajammers, 22

Doing absolutely nothing for a change. My brain cells have never been more grateful, I swear.—Angela, 20

Last week, walking in the rain around Makan and not complaining. It was like a blessing from heaven since it was so hot that day.—Tammy, 20

Recently, I got my first taste of the paintball challenge. I got to experience what it's like to be in a war. Making strategies, running, hiding, aiming and shooting enemies under the scorching heat of the sun. It was a fun experience but also an eye opener.—Gifaloo, 22

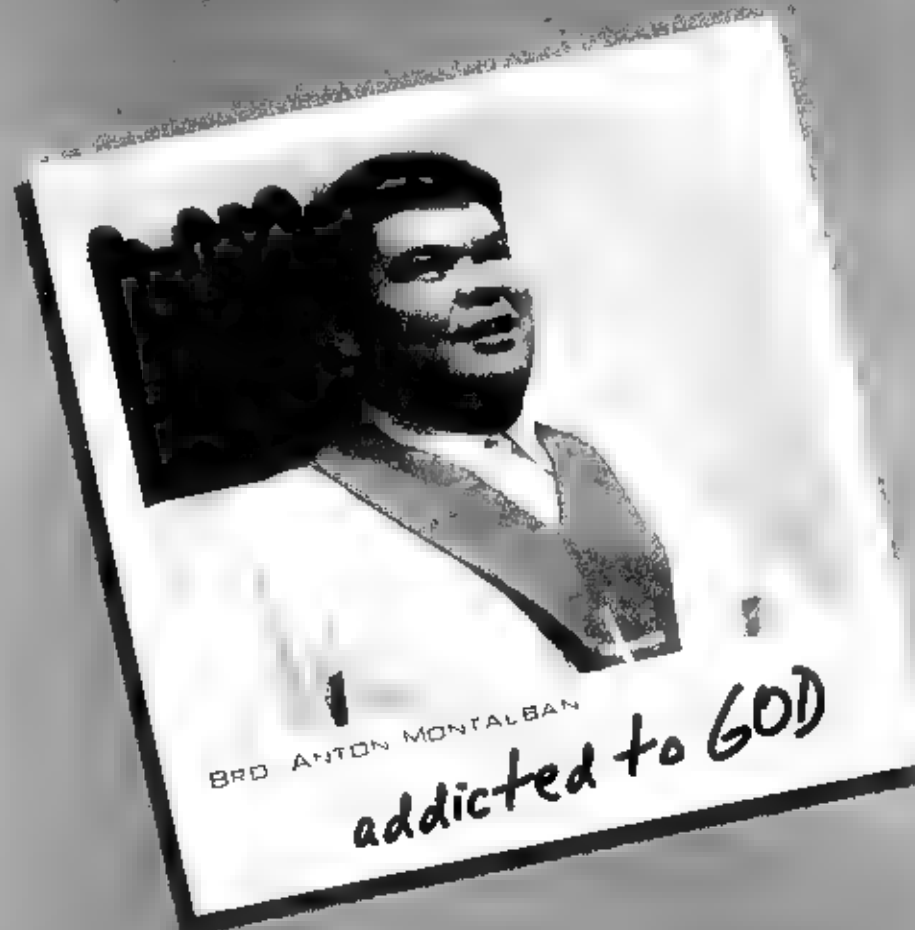
Playing badminton.—Mark

Being part of the 10 Accomplished Youth Organizations Search and meeting all the very inspiring finalists.—Bam, 25

Getting out of a horrible relation-

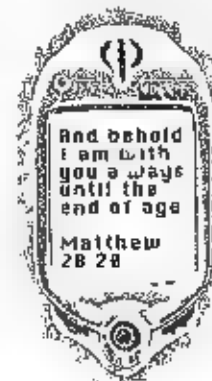
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You can find Anton doing God's work at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Ligouri Parish in Magallanes.

Suddenly last summer —in a class

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

AH, SUMMER class! It's not the most relaxing way to spend a vacation, but I went through one last year. While most of my peers were in summer hibernation, I took up five units of biology so I could shift courses. This translated to six grueling hours of lecture and lab every day, with two exams every week.

I psyched myself up for the class. After all, I love biology (yeah, sure). I live near school, so the daily trips weren't a problem. My mom also teaches the subject, so I had a tutor on call.

There were about 40 of us in class. I immediately made friends with my seatmates Jason and Jenica.

By week three, I thought I was already getting the hang of the summer school grind. I had read up on the chapters ahead, my test scores at that point weren't bad, and class was actually fun.

But I still had two weeks of animal life ahead. Then we were told to bring a couple of roaches the next day.

Two things were wrong with this assignment. One was the fact that I had to actually touch these bloody insects. Ever since one crawled on me during a blackout, I've never been exactly friendly to roaches.

The second thing wrong about the assignment was the timing. We just had our house bug-sprayed the night before.

So desperate was I that I resorted to texting Melissa, one of my good friends: "Hi Me! Do



Sweating
it out in
school
isn't a
bad way
to spend
your
summer.
Really.

you have any roaches in your house that you can spare?"

At 11 o'clock that night, thanks to her, I had three roaches secured in a jar.

Froggy woes

The last leg of biology was the fastest, but definitely not the easiest: we dissected frogs.

Like many students, I've never been a fan of the amphibian world. I think it's not so much the combination of cold and slime as our ignorance of what the animal will do next.

As my friends and I went out near the parking lot where the frogs were kept, I debated

ed with my lab partner on who should be the one to catch our specimen. We wagered and I lost.

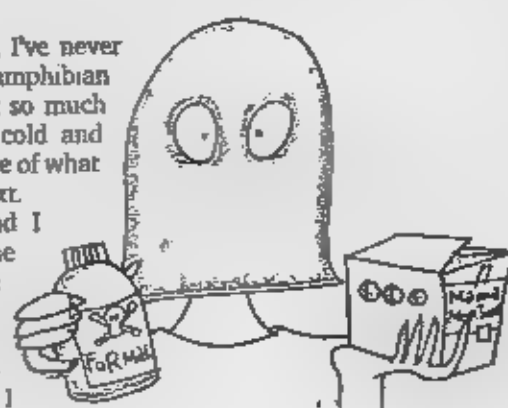
It was quite unfortunate that my partner and I had a very pregnant frog—the Mama Morton of the biological institute.

It took forever to put her to sleep—I was on the verge of drowning the poor thing in ether, but I guess her hormones were just too strong.

When she was finally sedated, we were instructed to make the first cut: down the back.

We pulled out clump after clump of grainy eggs. It took a while to get our specimen egg free, so that by this time, Mama Morton was already rising from her stupor.

I was appalled at the absurdity of the situation—I with the bloody knife in my hand and my victim lying helpless on the dissecting



pan, with her webbed feet struggling to get out of my grasp.

Our supply of ether—our sedative—was quickly dwindling, so the specimen's pain was unimaginable. I guess I could still feel sympathy for the creature because it was my first time.

Although I love science, I couldn't help but wish that we were operating on a synthetic specimen.

Exhausted and reeking of formaldehyde, I had to bring the specimen home—to keep in my freezer, for crying out loud.

I couldn't eat meat that night because it reminded me a lot of what went on that day.

Science, I thought, is definitely the most effective diet pill. Maybe that's why most of the researchers I see are in pretty good shape.

Days passed. One by one, the organs were exposed. Every lab period was a challenge to expose the desired area to meet my instructor's five-minute deadlines.

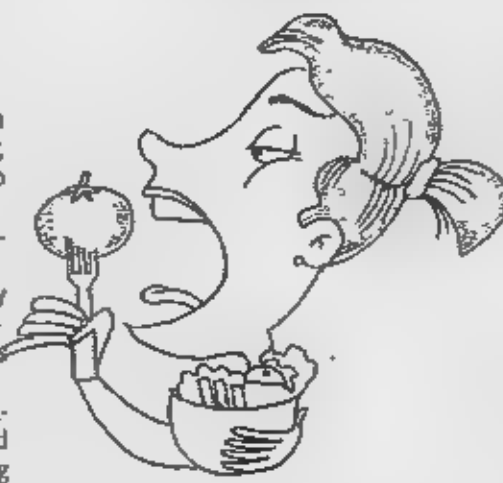
You can imagine us digging through flesh and bones, frantically searching for the kidneys that were stuck at the back, for the miserable liver that was flat and dehydrated and hanging by a vein, while my teacher's dreaded kitchen timer would go off with a screech.

But I must say the intricacies that go within every little creature will continue to amaze me. Yes, even creatures as unappealing as frogs.

Now as I write about it, summer school really isn't a bad way to spend your summer. While everyone else was bumming around and looking for things to do, I was learning something new everyday.

And if anything else, it's infinitely better to be mentally stressed for a month than prolong the torture for an entire semester. It's round two of summer school for me this month as I go through another five units of college. Wish me luck.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com



the summer fling

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

WHEN I was a student, I excitedly looked forward to summer, its worry-free, not to mention, work-free nights and weekends. Summer also gave me longer days and nights, which boded well for a more colorful social life for me.

Summer may also afford the vacationer the chance to have a special someone. 2bU! gladly shares with you some tips on the summer fling.

Don't actively search for a romantic fling or date. Don't be obsessed about it. Don't give yourself a deadline, either.

But do keep your eyes and mind open during parties, or any other event involving your friends.

Remember, your friends have friends who go to another school. When you bump into each other and introductions are made, be friendly and polite, but be careful not to drop hints at once lest you scare away your prospect.

Don't hope too much. Once you've found or met an interesting person, take it really, really slow. Especially if the person just popped out in front of you in a mall, record bar, or internet café. Don't declare you're in love at first sight lest you make yourself vulnerable to opportunists and pretenders. Get to know the person better. Build a friendship first.

Don't kiss on the first date. Better be sure of what you're willing to receive and give.

You may give the person your contact number. When the summer break is over and

Summer
means a
more
adventurous
social life.
Why not
have a
fling?

you're both back in your own separate worlds, you may want to renew ties. The person may even be of help to you in the future. But if the person showed any sign of being a potential stalker, then better keep your address and even landline to yourself. At least, you can easily change your SIM if you had already given your cell number.

Don't entertain flings if your boy- or girlfriend is abroad. Either you break up with him or her first before you entertain the thought. Think of it this way: will it be okay for you if him or her contemplates a fling just because you're away?

If you woke up one summer morning and realized you liked something more serious, it should not be a problem if you were both unattached. Tell the person what you think. But if you had made it clear to the person you were not the type who'd keep a lasting relationship, then you have a challenging situation. How do you prove to someone that you'd like to make your relationship work after having stressed you were not fit for a lasting relationship? Exert effort and sacrifice. Mean what you say. Put your words into action.

Do not trust someone you've just met. Don't be too trusting. It may not be wrong to bring along someone or a chaperone when you date.

May your summer be fun, exciting and worth remembering.

E-mail the author at then@postmark.net



ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAYO

What's the best thing that happened to you this summer?

From page D1

ship.—Starlet O Hara, 23

A new friend saved me from utter boredom last week. He treated me to lunch and made me laugh. Thanks, pare!—Bobbie, 15

Seeing topless babes on the beach. I love this summer.—Daryl

My best experience has been rediscovering my love for baking. I've made cinnamon rolls, lemon meringue pie and apple pie. I'm glad they were good and I haven't lost my touch.—Charley, 25

The best part of my summer was the time I went to the annual YFC's International Leaders Conference. *Astig sobral! Sulit yung init ng araw!*—Gudo, 19

I enjoyed my stay at my aunt's house in Laguna. For three nights, my cousins and I were drunk, together with some delicious-looking mae friends of my cousin who really made me starve.—Page, 22

Finally being able to try something new at work by going out on the field and experiencing adventures every day.—Lui Villalino, 23

So far my best experience this summer is having summer classes. Jokel—Nzo, 19

My job-hunting experience. Tiring yet inspiring.—Ryan, 22

Puerto Galera in early April,



THIS summer, I've met a lot of new friends especially when I started with my first job in Accenture. Working is fun when your friends are around. But what I missed this summer is the long vacation.—Franco Mario L. Cortez, 22



SPEND Holy Week with the people I love.—Asher

Baguio next week and Iloilo next month. Beautiful places with beautiful people. Wow Philippines.—Opid, 19

I've been able to talk to someone I met when he visited the Philippines, and the second time when he found me on the Internet almost every day for two weeks. And being able to chill out with my girl friends. The finest days of my two-week summer break.—Cher, 19

Baguio trip, which will hopefully be followed by a trip to Boracay with my loved ones.—Kat23

All-expenses-paid vacation in Boracay. You won't believe it. I went there with just P100 in my pocket.—Johnwill, 22

I wanted to ask this really great girl out for as long as I can remember. I finally got enough courage to do so a few days after classes ended. And she said yes.—Christian, 22

Meeting Cindy Kurleto, the goddess of beauty.—Ed, 22

Nagpunta ako sa Baguio, boring kasi dito sa house. Sobrang lamig. Kahit ginaw na ginaw na ako, okay lang pag natip ka yung uni dito sa Manila.—King, 22

Harvesting tilapia.—Eldric

Went to Orchard with barkada. Basketball, Ping Pong, tennis, swimming, bilao lunch and movie-room siesta. Next stop, Puerto Azul.—Allenthoughts, 22

Nagkabulotong ako at nasira lahat ng plano ko for Holy Week!—Deyey

Feasting at famous Quiapo burger joints near each side of Quiapo overpass.—Ellson "Badinger Z" Quismorio, 21

Having visited my relatives in the province after so many years.—Mikos, 22

Cleaning my room. Found so many things I had been looking for.—Janet, 17

I hardly go out... It was the experience of anticipating motherhood and the joy and pain that come with it.—Li'l Momah, 19

Riding a plane for the very first

time.—Omark Katot, 22

Had my first kiss. It was awkward, nerve-wracking and really wonderful.—Buttercup, 16

Gaining weight and not feeling guilty about it.—Kit, 23

The chance to host the Mossi-

mo bikini summit in Boracay. Paid vacationing in the midst of heavenly bodies.—TJM, 26

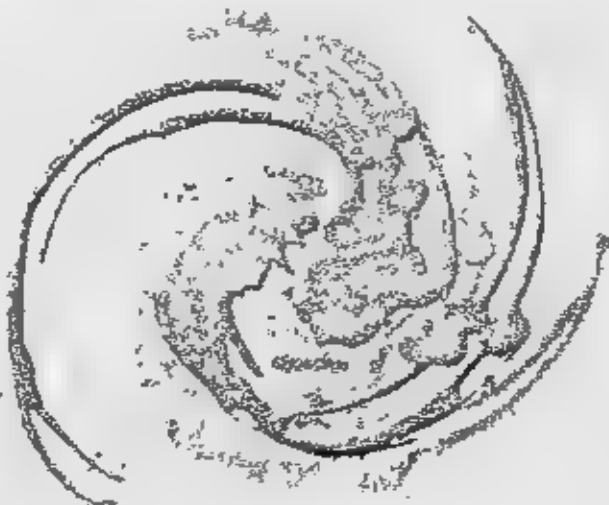
Nang 'sinagot' ako ng girlfriend ko two weeks ago. Also, the best experiences are when we talk heart-to-heart in the car before she goes home. Those moments are priceless and truly memo-

orable.—Raffy, 22

For the first time in years, I spent a two-day break with my family. We went to my mother's hometown in Bataan, which I haven't visited for a while. I haven't hit the beach yet, like I always do during summer, but so far, the trip with them was one

thing that stirred my excitement because I have not done that for a long time. It may not be as exciting as my previous summers, but spending quality time with my family was certainly an experience worth cherishing.—Chino, 26

With reports from Giles Ivan Aquino



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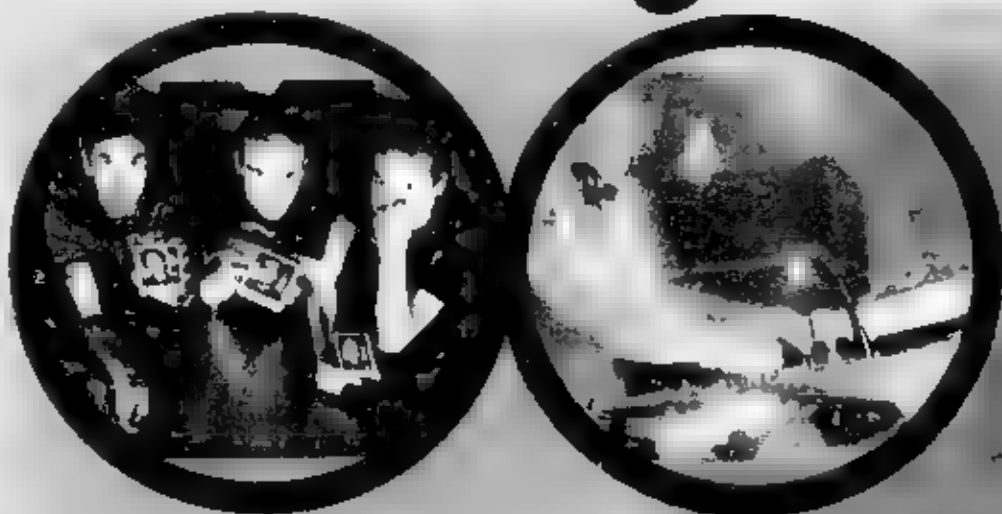

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Alternative Funky Grooves
with Kapatid

Henna Tattoo Tents
Free Diving/Snorkeling

May 2

HEY JUDE
Beach Volleyball
Wall Climbing
DJ Gianni
Henna Tattoo Tents
Free Diving/Snorkeling

May 3

HEY JUDE
Beach Football
Wall Climbing
RnB DJ
Henna Tattoo Tents
Free Diving/Snorkeling

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KARTZONE
Karting (Qualifying)
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VUDU
Party

May 2

KARTZONE
Karting (Finals)
Slot Car Race
Wall Climbing
The Dawn

VUDU
Fashion Show

May 3

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Street Party

May 3

NBC TENT
Spundae
Infusion
(Big Fish Party)

Subic



Anton Ramos

ITFL Crew

Plus: Jet-Ski Karting
Slalom / Motorbike Clinic
Wall Climbing

Arrived

May 2

SUBIC BOARDWALK
Free Jet-Ski Rides,
Wall Climbing

SUBIC INTERNATIONAL
Tuason Karting Clinic
Slalom Driving Clinic
Motorbike Clinic

May 3

SUBIC BOARDWALK
Free Jet-Ski Rides,
Wall Climbing

SUBIC INTERNATIONAL
Tuason Karting Clinic
Slalom Driving Clinic
Motorbike Clinic

DJ Anton Ramos -
Subic Boardwalk

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WHITE HOT. Valerie delos Santos, one of F&H's image models, shows us how to wear summer colors.



TECHNOPHILE. F&H also uses techno fabrics for the reveler in you, here on model Esaul.



LAVIE BOHO! Flesh it out with color and verve



FRINGE FLIRT. Enrie mini, only if you're skinny.



THE F&H MAN. Zak Hogen-esh from Australia embodies the hip, young urban guerilla



DARK MYSTERY. Cal Carrie's Mich Astudillo struts back to black.

Oh, those summer nights!

Text by Tim Yap
Photos by Carlo Ma. Guerrero



KNIT KNACKS. Look hot, stay cool in this F&H ensemble.

IF SUMMER lovin' gives you a blast this season, Folded and Hung—F&H to the hip, young and happening—should have one, too, after releasing its "sun up to sun down" collection at the recent Philippine Fashion Week.

With bold, sexy, flirty yet comfortable pieces styled by Chechel Joson, F&H presented summer party looks that would make you want to sing "Tell me more, tell me more!" while strutting down the runway that stretches from the bar to the beach.

Denim was a core part of the collection, worn long, short, cropped and capri-ed. There was also no shortage of mini skirts, from cotton to vintage, faded and washed.

F&H, popular among the style-setting but budget-wise youth, also went up the style scale by focusing on some major runway trends.

Cargo pants came in cotton twill khakis, and fatigues paired with cotton tees, hats and multipocketed bags for that laid-back urban guerilla look—the fashionista can have fun while layering different pieces to achieve different looks.

Also prevalent in the latest collection were Asian and ethnic-inspired prints. Hot, hot, hot in the international summer 2003 runways are the scuba-inspired pieces of scuba wear—cotton spandex tops—bandeau, tanks, and tubes

Image models

Joson gave tips for the fun, frivolous F&H fashionista. "You can accessorize with oversized framed sunglasses, colored bangles, bandannas, stilettos, shades, flip flops, metal chains and brass-plated earrings. The clue is to have as much fun as you want!"

Launched that night at the Glorietta Activity Center were image models Zak Hogen-esh,



SUMMER FLING. Fun in layering F&H pastel pieces, from beach to street and back.

a 20-year-old Australian, and Valerie delos Santos, the much-sought after mannequin and one of the prime movers of the Professional Models Association of the Philippines. They join F&H image models statuesque ramp diva Raya Mananquil and über model Joey Mead.

For men, the basic cotton shirts in short sleeves and slim fits with detailed cuts, patterned prints and embroidery were the norm, while vintage distressed denim and cargo pants with multi pockets in khaki and fatigue were made especially for that young, "up-for-it" hip urbanite.

To go with the look, Joson funkyed up the men's collection with trainers, garnison belts, flip-flops, hats and metal chains—perfect for all-day-all-night indulgence.

SUMMER'S hottest with sizzling F&H image model Raya Mananquil, shot on location at Acuario by ace fashion image maker Ronnie Salvacion and styled by Chechel Joson

Whiteners won't transform 'morena' into 'mestiza'

IT'S quite ironic that I decided to do an article on skin whitening only a couple of weeks after I talked about self tanners. But let me assure you I am not being fickle-minded.

Turn on the television or browse through a glossy magazine and you'll understand why there is so much interest in skin whiteners. Creamy-compexioned supermodels leave consumers clamoring for the same skin color, only to discover that no amount of whitening cream will turn caramel tint into milk.

It may surprise people to learn that even some fair-skinned women find the need for whitening products at one point in their lives. Finding a whitening product in my shopping basket, a saleslady muttered under her breath, "Mestisa na gusto pa magpaputi. Nagasayang ng pera."

It should be pointed out that while skin whitening is not that far removed from bleaching in the skin-care family tree, the two are not the same. Bleaching used to be the recourse of many women wishing to have Snow White's complexion. It lost its appeal when rumors about scary side effects and carcinogen spread.

Whitening gained popularity shortly after bleaching lost ground. But I think that even though the products generate a

lot of sales, customers are still clueless about what they really do to the skin.

Differentiating between bleaching and modern whitening is actually easier than the regimen itself. Bleaching is designed to make the skin lighter than its original color, thus the need for strong chemicals. Whitening, on the other hand, only tries to bring back the skin tone you had as a baby.

Whitening has other benefits, too. It seeks to even out skin tone, reverse sun damage, clear dark spots and smoothen skin texture. That is the reason why even fair-skinned girls need the products. Morenas and true-blue Pinays, though they may have to give up dreams of alabaster skin, reap considerable benefits from whitening preparations. The products help to improve dramatically skin texture and generate a glow.

Whitening is for everybody. And the great news is everybody can find a product to suit her budget and skin type. Local manufacturers and affiliates of high-end international labels have released their own versions of the highly popular skin-care preparation, giving consumers more and more choices.

Godiva Licorice Skin Whitening range. The 100-percent Filipino line is one of the first to use all-natural licorice as the main lightening component in their



Lora Gabol

products. Their line includes items for both face and body (even the underarms) and has expanded to basic makeup (with the introduction of their face powder).

Readily available and sold at reasonable prices, Godiva products make use of nature's own secrets and do not include artificial fragrances and coloring (potential allergens). I have made it a personal ritual to smooth on a generous amount of Godiva whitening body lotion before I hit the sheets at night. This is one of the few "creamy" products that don't leave a warm, sticky sensation, thank God. Even if it did, the baby-soft skin you have when you wake up will make the minor inconvenience worth it.

Godiva's face whitening cream is light and non-greasy, and does wonders for uneven, blotchy skin. If you OD'd (overdosed) on the sunbathing last Holy Week,

hide the damage with a dollop of the cream on your face in the morning and at night.

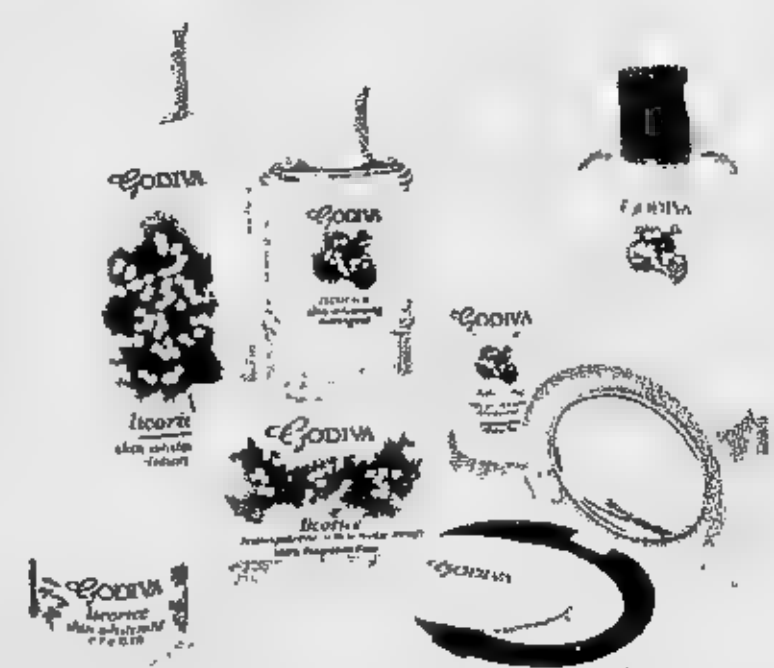
Among all products in the same category, the Godiva whitening anti-perspirant and deodorant is my ultimate favorite. Very mild and quick-drying, it keeps me dry even during the warmest summer day.

L'Oréal Flanitude White Perfect range. The innovative people from cosmetic giant L'Oréal Paris have formulated products to repair many skin problems, working day and night to prevent sun damage and to remove dark spots and uneven patches. The range boasts of a powerful ingredient, melanin block, that helps decrease melanin production, the main culprit behind brown spots and dark skin.

With L'Oréal's exclusive Mexoryl SX for sun protection and a patented form of beta hydroxy acid for mild exfoliation working in synergy with melanin block, the White Perfect line is a force to reckon with as far as sun damage is concerned.

My personal star product from the White Perfect range is the Triple Whitening Spot Corrector; a cream I use to lighten post-zit scars and even nasty scratch marks (from extreme clumsiness) on my arms.

A close contender is L'Oréal's Instant Clear Wipe-Off Lotion that refreshes and literally



GODIVA Licorice Whitening range

"wakes up" my tired, stressed skin. Watch out for the L'Oréal Paris Body Expertise home spa range that carries a whitening treatment for the body.

Nivea Visage White Whitening Care. Another range that swears by the power of natural licorice extract, Nivea's Whitening Care also works day and night for optimal whitening results. The products under Nivea White also provide round-the-clock moisture for supple, dewy, even-toned skin.

I use either the new whitening

untinted moisturizer or the natural day moisturizer every morning for a velvety-smooth finish even without makeup. Bedtime calls for the luxurious natural night repair that helps skin recover from damage with a boost of vitamin E and jojoba oil.

Godiva, L'Oréal, Nivea available at PCX, other health and beauty stores, pharmacies and major department stores nationwide.

E-mail the author at pdi_yan@yahoo.com

CHEERS, PARTYPHILES!
Mystery and mayhem—an uproar in the house with friends, strangers and lovers. Indulge, indulge, indulge!



YOUR curiosity will be rewarded by Kelly

MODEL'S MODEL
PMP
prexy
Rissa
Samson
does
Wiggy

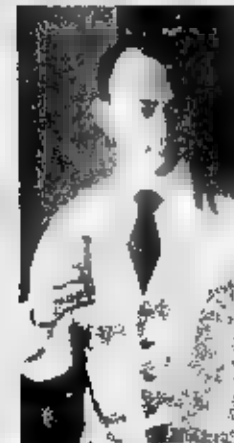


BABS, BABY. Trisha Bermudez, soon to be star

For the Curious



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HISS, pop. The sound of the can clicking, releasing its fizz with sweet scents, like bubbles slowly creeping into your system, infused the room with mystery.

Tim Yap

Curious? Looking for variety to spice up our nocturnal routine, my experimental friends and I hooked up one night and indulged in an evening of raucous role-play, gastronomic orgy and non stop-guzzling—the Vanilla Coke Mystery “Epi-Curious” Dinner was one night filled with fashionable fun and fantasy-filled frolic!

Azzurro, now at the Somerset Millennium Hotel (their G4 slot is now occupied by their newest franchise, Spargo’s World BBQ opening this Friday) was dressed for masochistic mayhem. The Bermudez sisters Sheila (Romero, the lady behind it all), Trisha and Bubbles made sure the show was on the road by having master chef Philip Golding prepare an orgasmic feast. Silver candelabras and art deco touches filled the black-and-white Azzurro function room. Red and white feathers adorned the trail towards the mezzanine lobby where the characters gathered.

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Role-play

In our case, it was ‘20s London, with the cast composed of the jaded queen of London society, Tamara Fara-Bucktooth, played by jet setting Wendy Puyat-Hotung, Kylie-esque British popstar Mary Jane Faithless as portrayed by coffee-to-cocktails mistress Celine Lopez, who wore “real deal Pucci,” vintage Chanel shades and a fur stole. Loud mouthed matinee idol Oliver Steed was Miko Valenzuela.

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I played campy East End society photographer Terence Shrimp, while Patrick Reyno and Trisha Bermudez gave life to gangster boss “Champagne” Charlie Bunsun and his girlfriend, former nightclub hostess slash wannabe actress Babs Crayfish, complete with gold chains and beret.

Wiggy, the most famous model in the world was, who else, Rissa Samson, in a chic, chic white cotton dress and Jackie O shades.

The dress-up part was just half the fun. The other half was that the guests had to be really game. And game they were. We would argue, laugh out loud, play with our characters, insult each other, accuse each other—all in the name of curiosity, exciting our taste buds for play, and really getting into the moment.

In our case, curiosity got us our Coke—Vanilla Coke, that is.

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All roads lead to Malate as Fidel goes the blue-collar route with a Hard Hat party—come in your roughest gear, ready for some rated F (Fidel) action as scene movers



A LIST. Partyphiles reading their script as the mystery dinner for the “curious” unfolds

AMEN TO THAT. Brich Edralin razzle dazzles



SASSY SISTERS. Bubbles Bermudez and Sheila Romero, the ladies behind Azzurro Somerset



YAPARAZZI does Brit camp

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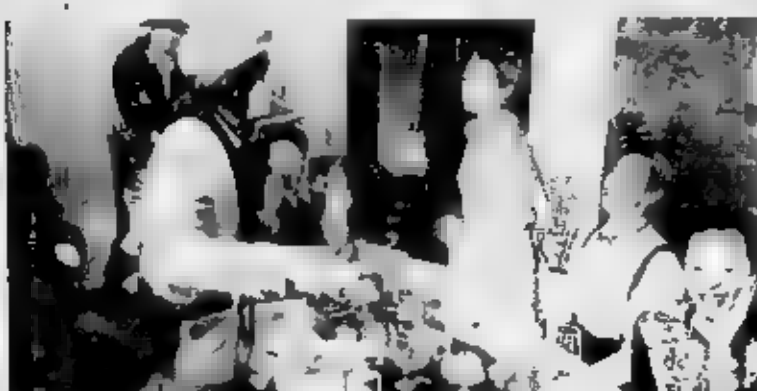
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AZZURRO AT SOMMERSET. Feathers, frolic, fantasy and fun



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I AM 24, male, and I was recently sent to Boracay for work for four days. Day one in Bora saw me flirting with a girl, and the rest of my stay was spent cheating on my girlfriend of four years. Everything was cool when I got back to the city. I forgot the girl and was happy to be reunited with my real girlfriend.

Now the girl from Bora is pestering me through my cell phone. She doesn’t know I have a girlfriend and that she was just a fling.

BORABOY

Dear Bora Boy, who’s probably raking in compliments for the golden tan, you are such a lying bastard who deserves all the persistent pestering you’re getting—and more. But since I’m ha-

lo-ed, I’ll try to have you in my heart as I deal with your dilemma.

Temptation, to begin with, is truly irresistible, so those who manage to ignore it (with or without the beads of perspiration) deserve the crown, sash and scepter. Unfortunately, you don’t even belong to the top 10, thanks to your resistance (lack of, actually).

Dude, did you really resist in the first place? Because how and how much you resisted Temptation Island (if at all) says a lot about how you regard your city chick and your relationship.

Your supposed resistance aside, the point is that you cheated, so you better anticipate God’s generous punishment especially for you.

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Niño Mark Sablan & September Mabino

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SEP

E-mail the authors at markand-sep@yahoo.com

CHEERS, PARTYPHILES!
Mystery and mayhem—an uproar in the house with friends, strangers and lovers. Indulge, indulge, indulge!



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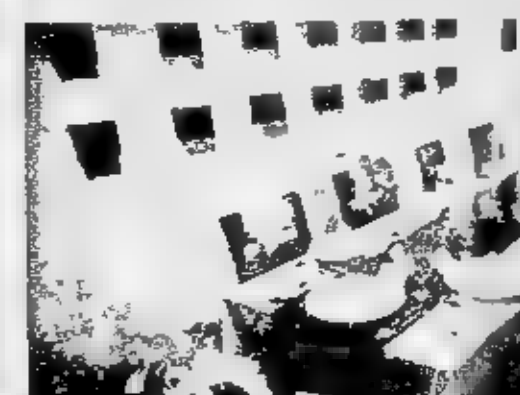


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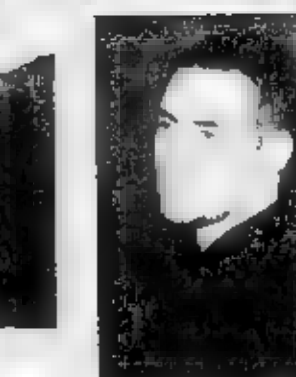
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With Nokia Multimedia Messaging Service (MMS), your message becomes so vibrant, it will take your breath away. With MMS, you can put text and a full-color picture all in one message.

Nokia has the longest line of MMS-capable phones, like the Nokia 7210, Nokia 6610 and Nokia 6100. Attach the camera headset, take a picture and add it to your message. Now, you can send and receive messages in style.

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Camera headset



Attach the camera headset
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**NOKIA
7210**



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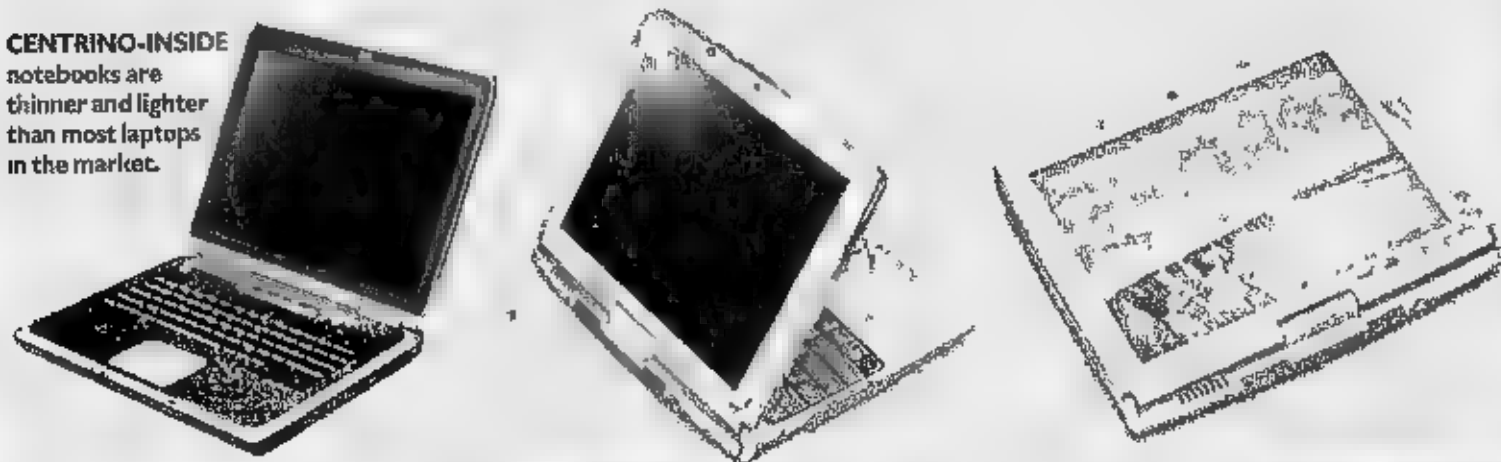


26U LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0919)880-33-54 or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

WIRED WORLD gets set to unwind

CENTRINO-INSIDE
notebooks are
thinner and lighter
than most laptops
in the market.



With the latest
in wireless technology,
everyone will be more
connected than
ever before

By Jason Doplito
26U Correspondent

"WE are at a major tipping point," says Chak Wong, Intel Asia Pacific's director of product marketing and business management at the Singapore Expo last month. A tipping point is when a major breakthrough is made in technology, paving the way for a more exciting future. And for Mr. Wong, unwired computing or Internet mobility is the latest breakthrough that Intel has to offer.

Intel Centrino is the newest in mobile processor technology, making laptops a major resource not only for businessmen, but also for anyone who needs to be connected to the world anytime and anywhere.

For now, we connect to the Internet using cables and wires that we have to attach to landline phones, or wherever Internet access exists. This limits our movement as it is not possible for us to be on the move while surfing the Web at the same time.

With the Centrino, laptops can gain wireless access to the Internet, making it possible for anyone to send e-mail or search the Internet while one is at the mall or airport. This is made possible through the "Wi-Fi" (wireless fidelity) capability, which allows users to gain access to the Internet from wireless "hotspots."

Hot spots are areas such as offices, cafés, and hotels where there is Internet availability over wireless LAN (Local Area Network.)

Intel has put up the infrastructure for the application of the Centrino technology in the country. TeleAnalytics estimates that by 2006, there will be 27 million frequent public WLAN users worldwide.

But the new technology does not only offer mobility. It extends battery life and allows for thinner and lighter designs of laptops.

Intelligent

According to Lai Yit Loong, country manager of Intel Technology Asia in Singapore, Centrino has an intelligent power distribution, comparable to a motion sensor that turns lights on when you enter a room, and shuts them off when you exit. This means that it reduces power usage; the processor produces less heat. Laptop makers don't have to create extra space designed for processors to keep cool, paving the way for thinner and lighter PC notebooks (weighing just three pounds).

The processor's integrated wireless capability enables reduced interference between Intel PRO/Wireless Connection and certain Bluetooth devices, hastening connection to any Bluetooth-enabled mobile phone or PDA (personal digital assistant) for total mobile connectivity.

To illustrate the impact of the new technology, a video showed case studies of the product. It showed that the product allows access and updating of office databases from anywhere, video conferencing and easy connection.

For the future, Centrino provides the possibility of a remote-learning university, in which lectures can be made through TV broadcasts. The student will be able to view her class materials wherever she may be, and update her standing depending on what is posted at the school's website.

Later in the day, the media participated in the Intel Mobility Quest, an Amazing Race-type game that showcased the potential of laptops powered by the Centrino technology.

The quest was held around the major hotspots in Singapore. It started at the Singapore Expo, then went on to the Changi Airport and Suntec City Mall, before ending at the Conrad International Hotel.

Although Internet access gets cut off when

WIRED 64

SMART StarTXT

Buddy

JOYCE NEVER MORE LOVING

monday
I don't know why, I just LOVE underwear. They're essentials na pwedeng luxury. That's why I decided to go in2 the underwear business

wednesday
Was in the mall knina 2 buy sme stuff, and I almost tripped! but naging nobody saw - or at least, I think so. *giggles*

friday
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A TECHNOLOGY FILIPINO

Chris proudly considers his scholastic triumphs as his greatest achievement. Graduating with top honors, he believes that the perseverance and determination he has shown towards studying, which he has always pursued with a singular passion, have finally paid off. For the most part, Chris has his parents to thank for that. "My parents always remind me to give my best in everything that I do," this young achiever, who seems to never back out of even the most daunting of challenges, admits.

Complementing his scholarly ways, Chris is also a leader of exemplary charisma who has just finished his term as the vice president of Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila's Engineering Mathematics Society. In his spare time, Chris is quite the music and entertainment buff as he likes to surf the Internet to look for MP3s and episode guides of his favorite TV programs. Chris' competitive spirit is expressed not only in the classroom but also through sports as he devotes time to engage in table tennis and softball.

Now that Chris has graduated college, this GTAAA Overall Awardee plans to use the talents and sheer determination that have already brought him so much success, and apply these into helping build a nation worthy of the future generation.

CHRISTOPHER ROLAND B. BASIM
Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng M



THE GTAAA

BOARD OF JUDGES

With over 200 awardees recognized to date, the Globe Telecom Academic Achievement Awards (GTAAA) has now been established as the country's only annual industry-academe linkage program. Marking its 8th year, the GTAAA presents itself as a credible social responsibility program of Globe Telecom which seeks to recognize the best graduating students nationwide in the College and High School levels.

Recently, the GTAAA has also become an award-winning program. Recognizing the GTAAA's promotion of a culture of intellectual excellence among the youth, the Public Relations Society of the Philippines has awarded the GTAAA an Anvil Award of Merit for Community Relations - Civic/Educational Organizations last February 2003.

The GTAAA's search to recognize College students who excel in the fields of Electronics & Communications Engineering (ECE) and Electrical Engineering (EE) and High School students who excel in the fields of Science and Math has taken the program all over the nation - from Luzon, to Visayas, to Mindanao.

Through the GTAAA, Globe Telecom aims to nurture in young Filipinos an interest in the technology fields like telecommunications, engineering and information technology. It further aims to encourage students to excel in these fields to build the Filipino nation.

In helping the pursuit of admirable achievements and fostering qualities of leadership among today's young people, the GTAAA hopes to provide a constant source of quality manpower that will run the industries of the country's future.

The GTAAA has also become a standard of excellence. With former GTAAA winners becoming a source of pride and inspiration in their schools, the GTAAA has encouraged students to excel in their studies. High school graduates have become interested to pursue studies in fields related to the technology sector thereby contributing to the growth of the Filipino nation. Likewise, college graduates have become inclined to look for jobs related to their field of expertise, giving them the opportunity to further the industry they belong to.

In its eight years of existence, the GTAAA's image as a valuable program has also been widely recognized within the government, private sector, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) industry and the academe.



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GTAAA OVERALL AWARDEE



GTAAA

THE 8TH
GLOBE TELECOM
ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT
AWARDS

Technology drives today's world and the driving is fast, furious and intense. The turns are sharp, the stakes are high and always there are others close behind wanting to catch up.

In the driver's seat of technology is where we will find the Filipino youth. In our youth's hands lie the task of steering us into the future and, more importantly, in the right direction.

Youth driving technology. Technology driving the youth. That is the way it should be. Globe Telecom takes up the challenge of powering the youth with the GLOBE TELECOM ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS (GTAAA).



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HIGHER LEARNING



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ECE



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EE



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Mapua Institute of Technology
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Central Philippine University
ECE



Leneth B. Libre
University of San Carlos-
Technological Center
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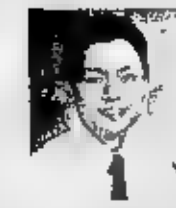
Genesis G. Tan
University of Santo Tomas
EE



Noel T. Torres
Silliman University
EE



Ian R. Victorino
Don Bosco Technical College
ECE



Jred M. Villafranca
University of the Philippines-
Duman
ECE



Marlina Joy Barker
King's College of Isulan
Sultan Kudarat



Richardson D. Billones, Jr.
Makati Science High School
Makati City



Sheena Nova R. Binoya
Notre Dame of Kidapawan College
North Cotabato



Charlene Lesley T. Chan
Leyte Progressive High School
Tacloban City



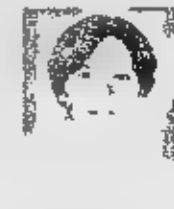
Josine Marie C. Conti
Saint Bridget College
Batangas



Sheela Ann G. Datukon
Albert Einstein School
Maguindanao



Neil Anthony D. Gidlayan
University of Negros
Occidental-Recoletos
Bacolod City



Dianne C. Go
Colegio de las Hijas de Jesus
Iloilo City



Dianne Mina A. de Guzman
Our Lady of Perpetual Succor College
Marikina City



Ariane Mae A. Napinas
Christ the King College
Calbayog City



Lou Angela D. Oliveros
Divine Word College-San Jose
Occidental Mindoro



Irish Jay Q. Pasamonte
Palawan National School
Palawan



Angelo Carlo E. Reyes
La Salle Green Hills
Mandaluyong City



Florante Q. Robin
Tagbilaran City Science High School
Tagbilaran City



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Cebu City



Leonideza P. Romano
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Jun Carlo M. Sunglao
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Dumaguete City



Marie Frances M. Tolentino
Leuteburo National High School
Oriental Mindoro

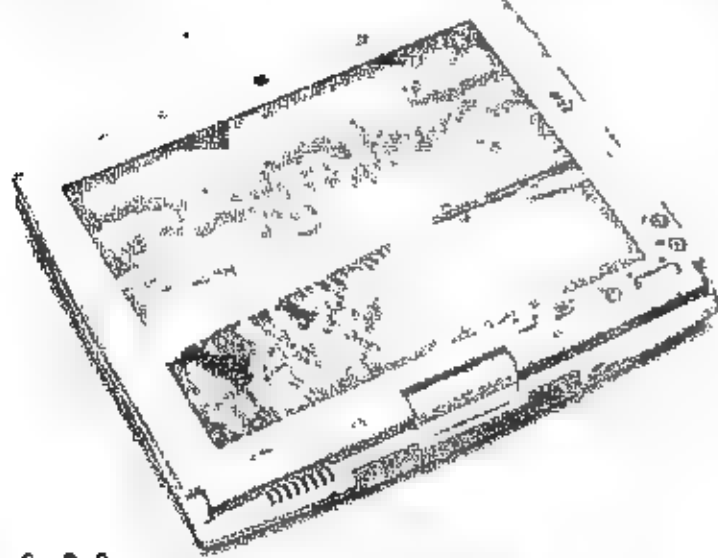


Dangel G. Villanueva
Cavite National Science High School
Cavite



The GTAAA recently received the 2007 Award of Merit from the Philippine Education Society of the Philippines for its contribution to the education of the Filipino youth. The GTAAA has had a positive impact among young Filipinos and has encouraged the development of their potential.

Gerardo C. Ablaza, Jr.
President & CEO
Globe Telecom



WIRED WORLD gets set to unwire

From page E1

traveling through places where there are no hotspots, connection is nevertheless fast where WLAN is available.

The downloading of web pages is considerably faster than when one does it using the home PC since Centrino makes use of radio signals to hook up to the Internet instead of dial-up or cable networking.

And since the laptops are way lighter than their predecessors, one can hold them with one hand while typing with the other.

Filipinos may be a bit apprehensive with the new technology, especially since the price of "unwiring" through the use of "Wi-Fi" Internet is not cheap. Wireless Internet Service Providers (WISP) may charge prices that are a bit steep.

But sooner or later, wireless surfing will be the norm, and we will all live in a world smaller than it already is today.

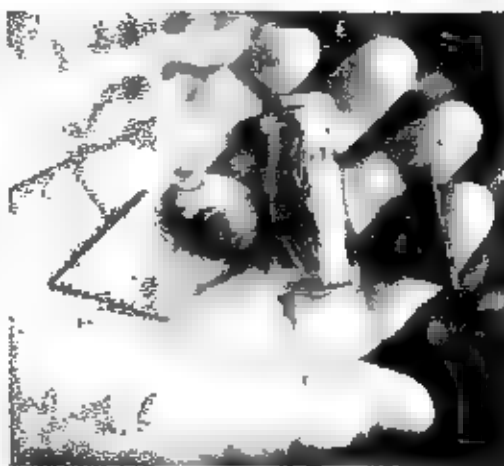
For more information about Centrino-inside notebooks, visit <http://intel.com/home/notebooks>

2BU! PROMO

And the winners are . . .

LAST week, we asked you to join us on our quest to Quiapo and offered you the chance to win clothes, accessories and good-luck charms. The response was overwhelming.

The 2BU! inbox was flooded with entries from readers from all over the Philippines. Needless to say, we sweated and argued our



way to a decision.

These people emerged victorious.

Sixteen-year-old Julia Benitez, an incoming freshman at UP Diliman, says she needs all the help she can get to expand her school wardrobe. We're giving her the tops and the socks.

"I'm an incoming freshman at UP Diliman, and as you all know, casual ang damit. That's why I need all the help I can get to be able to add some things to my wardrobe. I'm preparing myself for tutoring services so that I'll have money to buy clothes from Divisoria."

We want 21-year-old Joy Ruth B. Ploperio to prove her sister wrong. We're giving her the accessories package.

"I deserve those accessories because my sis-



ter used to tell me that I'm so plain and boring. I'd like to give life to my simple clothes by using accessories. It would be fun and a good experience to be adventurous and not just stick to what I have gotten used to. [I'm] trying to reinvent myself."

Twenty-year-old Danicar Mariano from the

Ateneo de Manila flaunted her magic prowess by sending us two very interesting entries. She will receive the magic powers this is the shorter entry. "The Philippines has always been an interesting place to live in because of its uncanny faith in fate and magic realism. The blind, the sick, the weary are miraculously healed by albularyos whose powers we should never, sadly for us, discredit. Refusing to believe in the invisible is admitting to a lack of imagination. And the boring and unimaginative can never see God. There is really no contradiction between magic and Christianity in their fundamental core. They both teach faith in the union of the spiritual and corporeal, heralding the presence of 'the spirit' in 'the flesh.'"

Winners may claim their prizes on Mondays from 4 p.m. onward at the Philippine Daily Inquirer building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascarido Streets, Makati. Please look for Pam or Jason. For inquiries, call 897 8808 on Mondays.

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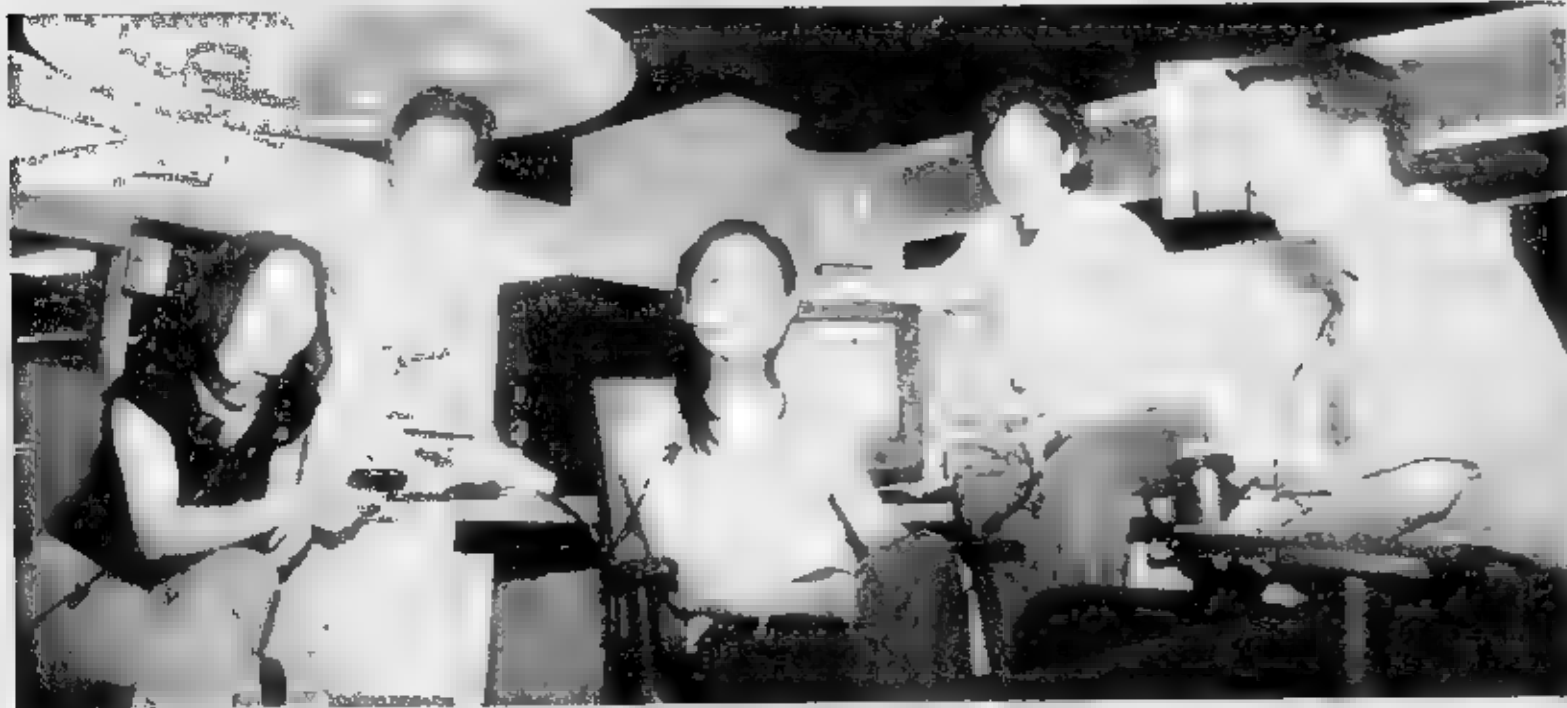
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LIFESTYLE

CALL-CENTER work means better pay, a campy work environment and quicker route to the top for the fresh grad.



A new job is just a call away

By Jason Doplito
2BU1 Correspondent

THIS summer, while most young people are gearing up for the beach, the rest of them will be gearing up for the corporate world. After all, while the season means vacation for the lucky ones, for the rest it means embracing the real world, specifically the world of the job seeker. And given the hot weather, it is not exciting for one to be dressed in corporate attire and go in and out of the buildings on Ayala Avenue

when one would rather be in swimwear and enjoy the sun on the beach.

Fortunately, the recent boom in information and communications technology sector has made things easier for fresh graduates. Job hunters would find the IT industry a breath of fresh air to the other industries that hire only applicants with previous working experiences. This is especially true of the call center industry, which has accepted new graduates.

Ambergris Solutions has enjoyed tremendous growth in the last three months since it started operations. Its employees have increased from the original 25 to 400.

Like most call centers, Ambergris serves

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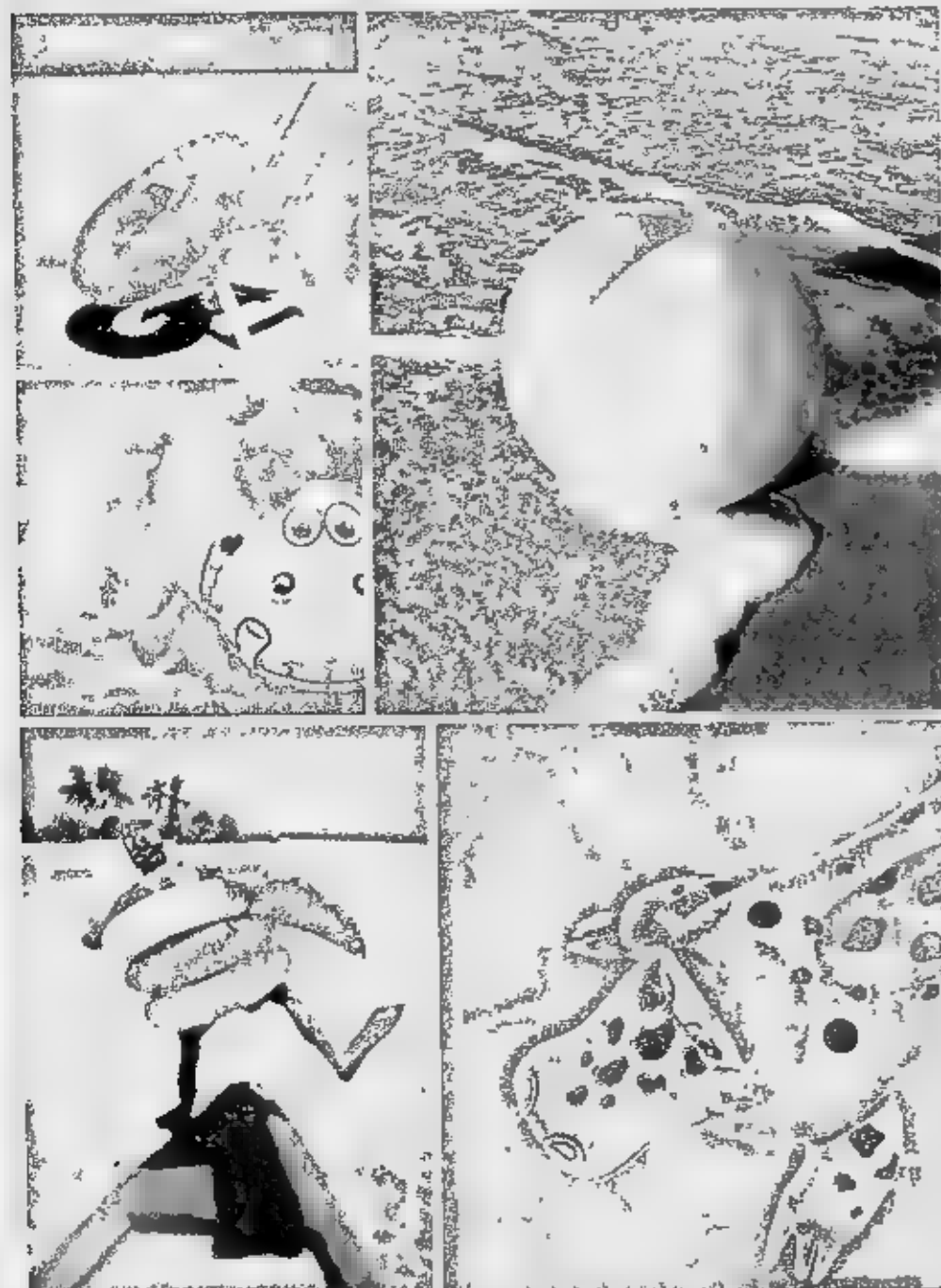
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'Look do we have here'

A promising group of young thespians

By Walter Ang
2bUI Correspondent

NO one can hate man more than man himself," said the poster heralding a twinbill presentation by the Philippine High School for the Arts (PHSA).

Despite the bleak and ominous tone of the poster, I announced to my friends, after watching the show at the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) Huseng Batute Theater, "I haven't had this much fun watching a theater production in a very long time!"

Having seen too many plays and musicals that were too pretentious, too commercial and too unoriginal, the recital cum graduation of the theater majors of the country's only arts high school was definitely a breath of fresh air. The young students displayed a vibrant, earnest energy in the two comedies they presented. They had an obvious passion for the craft and art of theater.

The matinee featured Czech writer Karel Capek's "RUR" (Rossum's Universal Robots). Graduating senior Nina Angela Rumbines shone in her portrayal of Helena Glory, the idealistic and vulnerable young woman on a humanitarian mission to liberate the robots in Rossum's Universal Robots factory. Rumbines was paired with fellow senior Jean Marc Cordero, who made a nasty yet funny Damon, the factory's general manager who falls in love with Glory. Other seniors in the cast included Mary Anne Leduna (Alquist) and Joseph Keith Anicoche (Dr. Gall), whose German accent was spot on.

It was Damon who said, "No one can hate man more than man himself," when the handful of humans in the factory realized too late the repercussions of playing God.

The play ended on a positive note, but gave the audience a lot to think about in this day of genetic manipulation and robotic advancements.



HARRY Damon (JM Cordero) looks on as Helena Glory (Nina Rumbines) examines Robotess Sulla (Abner Delina) in "RUR."



THE SHIPWRECKED ladies on the island of Prospera in "Ang Unos" (Shakespeare's "The Tempest")

'First and almost'

One of the most hilarious parts of the play was the use of commonly mispronounced/misused English phrases in the Filipino translation of the late Rogelio Sicat. Teacher/overall director Herbert Go, who is also the associate artistic director of the CCP resident theater company Tanghalang Pilipino, said the use of the "phrases" was inspired by a line in the play, "Well, well, well indeed."

The cast used lines like, "Well, well, well!"

Look do we have here," or "So far, so good, so far," and "First and almost, it's not your problem anymore, it's my problem anymore!" The unexpected lines (which can be found online at www.jeepeygang.com/bola/jokes.html) kept the audience in stitches and eased the tension during heavy scenes, keeping the tone light and easy.

Apart from acting, Rumbines also designed the set, while PHSA alumni Kristine Balnes did the costumes. Balnes' simple yet creative use of black and silver gave a funky, and otherworldly look to the robots. The whole look of "RUR" was very textured and very, dare I say it, cute!

Island setting

While Rumbines gave "RUR" an industrial and electronic look with large metal sheets, she created an isolated island setting for the second play, William Shakespeare's "The Tempest," by using sand and bamboo. Balnes fixed the characters' costumes with all colors of the rainbow. The candy colors and varied patterns added vigor to Rody Vera's sterling Filipino translation "Ang Unos."

Go constantly exposes audiences to Filipino translations as they show "the breadth and depth and versatility of the Filipino lan-

guage as a medium of translation." Go and Vera have collaborated before as director and translator, respectively, in Dulaang Talyer's "Antony and Cleopatra" and Tanghalang Pilipino's "Rhythm Method."

In their latest effort, most male characters were changed into women roles, and Skyyx Shannah Labastilla was easily the standout with her earthy and eloquent portrayal of the magician Prospera. Other seniors in this tale of magic and enchantment included Alison Segarra (Miranda), the sultry Isabelle Antoinette Martinez (Bastiana) and Rose-

lyn Loria (Antoinetta).

After Prospera's magic tempest brought a ship full of old enemies to her island, her spirit slave Ariel did the legwork. Senior Anna Rea Catamora brought the house down by portraying Ariel as a lithe, flexible creature that would do contortions with every line.

Audiences stood up to see what kind of pretzel shape Catamora had transformed into whenever she spoke. Her imitation of a frog was

definitely one of the great scene stealers of the evening.

The play ended with old misunderstandings forgiven, friendships renewed, and new loves forged. As with most Shakespeare comedies, all's well that ends well.

The recital would not be the end for the high-school class, which had to juggle a regular academic workload with extensive arts training the past four years.

Senior Roselyn Loria said, "What's past is prologue. What's been done over the years is mere warm-up for the events ahead."

If the recital is any indication, this class is certainly all fired-up for the work ahead.

Tanghalang Pilipino offers acting and production/stage management workshops this summer. Call 832-1125.



THE ROBOTS of Rossum's Universal Robots factory take over from the humans.

The recital cum graduation of theater majors of the country's only arts high school is a breath of fresh air

A new job is just a call away

From page F1

US-based clients by offering customer-care solutions abroad. Work follows US time zones and so the bulk of its employees are busy during the night. Because of this, previous work experience doesn't count as much as attitude.

"We hire based on attitude and then we train for skill," says Mike Macapagal, the HR manager. "Cheerful disposition is needed because we receive irate calls every night. The person must also have the humility to accept those calls without taking them personally."

If the right person has the right attitude, it will be easy for him to acquire the technical know-how, the manager adds.

Light and jovial

The work environment in Ambergris is light and jovial. The call handlers smile a lot even if the clients on the other line don't see them. The computer desks are adorned with personal photos and cartoon characters. A group holds a costume theme every Friday.

The light mood is reflected in the interiors. Designer Isabel Asuncion-Berenguer created a fashionable and soothing workplace.

Since the call center's operations are conducted mostly at night, Ambergris has tried to foster a comfortable mood in its work, entertainment and sleeping areas.

Employee Hazel Bacabac enjoys the relaxed mood. "I can choose to nap for my mini-breaks because we have sleeping bunks here," she says. "It definitely feels like a second home."

Sleeping bunks here mean double-deckers complete with wall-to-wall carpeting, mattresses and a Zen-like fountain.

Others can hang out at the lounge and dining areas. And in these places, the ambiance gets even better.

"The PlayStation isn't working right now," Macapagal apologizes as we enter the entertainment center. "Probably from overheating."



BANTERING in-between calls and sleek workstations are part of the job package at Ambergris' Solutions.

The entertainment center has a television set, surrounded by a sofa with large throw pillows. There are a café and a bar at the other side.

Asuncion-Berenguer used the warm colors of orange and wood to create a cozy atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the dining area approximates a trendy and chic restaurant.

"We really made the facilities as appealing as it can be," Macapagal says. "The owners of the company know that call-center work is a very challenging job. We'd like to do the best that we can to make the jobs exciting and, at the same time, less difficult."

Call agents undergo trainings to educate them about the culture of the company and to equip them with skills on handling clients.

Agents have to be knowledgeable of US geography and proficient in American English. Once they become call-center agents for Ambergris, career growth opportunities become rife, Macapagal says. "When I do the HR orientation program, I always say that they can build a career here. We have vacancies that occur very often wherein we promote internally."

In fact, there have been agents who get promoted to supervisors even before they become regular employees, Macapagal says.



It would seem there's no stopping the growth of call centers in the Philippines. Timothy Lavin, chief operating officer of Ambergris, says the country has an excellent workforce.

In fact, the Philippines hopes to equal or even surpass India, which leads the global call-center market. And this summer, fresh graduates can make that possible.

Visit www.ambergrissolutions.com or call 638-9440 or +(0917) 514-3940 for more details.

THE EMPLOYEE lounge would pass as a chic restaurant for the smart set.

THE WORK environment, as designed by Isabel Berenguer Asuncion was calibrated to be an added benefit for the workers.



Smashing Zwan and good ol' country Miller

From page F3

where Burke gets to do his little prayer spiel (you've got to love the guitar interlude, though), its lines like, "I believe, I believe... God and Heaven are my own," that prove that, yes, Toto, we're not in Kansas anymore.

Corgan has received much flak for retiring one of the most influential bands of the '90s. And while many people were sure he'd put up another band after the Smashing Pumpkins, most of them still don't think his efforts would pay off as well as his first band.

But there's no denying that Corgan has talent, and he'll carry that wherever he goes.

Besides, who's complaining? You've got a rock icon backed up by four great and talented musicians.

As he says on "Settle Down": "Whatever I can do / I will / Because I'm good at that."

The Instigator
Rhett Miller
Warner Music

If you're looking to buy this album expect-

ing heart-wrenching songs similar to Miller's first single, "Come Around" (yes, the title isn't "Am I Gonna Be Lonely?"), as if looking for a John Mayer/Ryan Adams clone, better stick to downloading that one song from the Net, because the rest of the album (save for the track "Nervous Heart") doesn't chuck out songs about wonderland bodies.

If, however, you're looking for great, raw ditties about love, love, love, then this is worth your money.

To start off, Miller, former frontman of the Texan band The Old 97's, is a good songwriter, and it's obvious in the lyrics. "The Instigator" touches on love, admiration, pain, and loving from afar (think about it—they're pretty much the same thing). The way he presents love in each song with that alternative-country twinge makes this a fun, melodious and catchy album.

But the album explores more of Miller's pop side. Put it this way: if Miller is confused between doing pop and the alternative-country thing, he ought to stay schizophrenic.

Most people would argue that Miller's songs lack the honesty that he had back when he was doing songs for The Old 97's. Could a man who has just been married write songs that question if he will be lonely for the rest of his life? Who cares? It's music that many can relate to, with lines like "I want to live / I want to see tomorrow / So I can see you tomorrow" ("I Want to Live"), and "You've got terrible vision if you don't see / that I'm in love with you and how that means everything" ("Terrible Vision") that make people keep this album on "repeat" in their players.

From the country-inspired track "The El" to the bittersweet goo in "Your Nervous Heart," Miller has mastered the formula to getting geeky, mushy lyrics to sound cool and poetic.

How can you lose with a guy who can put in stuff like "Two of us in a double-feature / I'm a rock and roller, she's a science teacher... I'm in love with a four-eyed girl" ("Four-Eyed Girl"); and "I try to make your world a better place / I'd smother you in



kisses / I'd give you outer space / But you're terrified and it's tearing me apart / Can I kiss your furrowed brow and calm your nervous heart?"

And besides, everyone loves an uplifting love song or two. Even more if it's about unrequited love and failed relationships. As Miller sings, "This is What I Do," "I'm gonna sing this song forever / About a girl that I once knew / And how she is always leaving / This is what I do."

DISCOVER GOLD



A cut above the rest

Throughout the course of history, man has been obsessed with the quest for perfection. Man's struggle to attain excellence is chronicled in many volumes through various means. One such chronicle for the quest for perfection is contained in the ongoing saga we call the modern Olympic Games. The very first modern Olympic Games were held in April 1896 in Athens, Greece. The event, though not well-publicized, drew tremendous support from people around the world. It became so successful that it has been held every four years since, with many champions rising to the occasion and establishing themselves as cuts above the rest in the process.

Such displays of above-average skills continue to draw the world's interest to this day. While preparations are conducted endlessly in anticipation of each and every Olympic Game, other venues to display the continuous quest for human perfection are held almost daily. Thus, stories of strength, courage and determination abound as do heroes who've established themselves as icons in their chosen fields of sports, Olympic or otherwise. If the names Muhammad Ali, Mark Spitz, Tiger Woods and the like sound familiar to you, then you know what we speak of. These people have truly become cuts above the rest, as they've managed to set standards upon which everyone else who indulges in the sport are measured. Perfection indeed, is equated with those who know how to bring home the gold.

Such standards of perfection are ascribed to items of value as well. In the fine art of brandy-making, for example, a single name stands high above the rest as it has set the standard upon which other brandies are measured. That name is Fundador.

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INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

He knows KUNG FU and then some

By Ruel S. De Vera

THIS is my story, and it is true. The 40, of course, a much-parodied, much-repeated line from those kinetic, frenetic Hong Kong action movies where anything is a weapon and anywhere is a battlefield.

What turned the high flying antics, the product of a sublime communion of martial arts, wire-work and special effects, into something more than a regional delicacy can be traced to two specific movies.

The Wachowski brothers turned action movies on their heads with the blockbuster-and-bullet-timing "The Matrix" while Ang Lee poured poetry into swordfights, earning them Oscar glory with "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." Since then, almost every fight scene churned out by Hollywood bears more than a passing resemblance to those two movies.

That literally makes Yuen Wo-Ping the man who single-handedly changed the fight scene in both East and West. A formidable presence in the Far East long before his Hollywood breakout, he was born in 1945, the son of Yuen Siu-tin, Hong Kong's first martial arts director and more famously known as the real Drunken Master. He and his brothers naturally followed the same path as their influential father, enrolling in the Yu Jim Yuen Peking Opera School, which Jackie Chan and other Far East stars also attended.

Wo Ping then made the jump into films, choreographing innovative and stunning fight scenes and directing box office hits. In the late 1970s, he was instrumental in transforming Chan into a worldwide martial arts phenomenon. Aside from Chan, Wo Ping was also crucial in catapulting Donnie Yen, Michelle Yeoh and Jet Li to action stardom. He has worked on literally dozens of Hong Kong martial arts movies, including such seminal hits as "Snake in the Eagle's Shadow," the aforementioned "Drunken Master," "Once Upon a Time in China II" and "Black Mask."

Already a venerable master in Hong Kong, Wo-Ping made a splash in Hollywood when he trained Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne and the other American actors in "The Matrix." Whoa!

Then, Wo Ping choreographed the balletic battles between Chow Yun Fat and Zhang Ziyi in Ang's "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." After the critical and commercial knockout delivered by those movies, wire-works, acrobatic martial arts and special effects have become de rigueur, with everyone wanting to make the next "Matrix" or "Tiger." In

fact, now he will once again amaze audiences as the Wachowski brothers' sequel, "The Matrix Reloaded," flying kicks into Metro Manila screens on May 16. In this exclusive e-mail interview with the INQUIRER, master Yuen Wo-Ping reflects on the road that led to "The Matrix Reloaded" and the trilogy's finale, "The Matrix Revolutions," due out in November.

How would you characterize your first experience working on a Hollywood film production?

"The Matrix" was the first film I did in Hollywood. The first time I went to Hollywood, it wasn't really difficult. I would discuss with the director what he wanted from the action and how he wanted the action to work with the special effects. The directors didn't actually give me a hard time and they gave me a lot of creative freedom. They were very supportive.

How did you start your career as a martial arts choreographer? What influenced you to pursue the film business?

That was a very, very long time ago—almost 30 years ago. The film was called "Mad Killer" (1971) and was directed by Ng See-yuen. I was just following in my father's footsteps. My father started teaching (my brothers and me) kung fu when we were still very young. My father was a martial arts director and he was the one who got us into the business. We started out as stuntmen.

How do you think "The Matrix" changed the look of Hollywood action movies?

After "The Matrix," quite a few Hollywood action films started looking for Hong Kong action directors to design their action. I think "The Matrix" influenced it a lot. It started a trend toward the use of Hong Kong action styles in Hollywood movies.

How did you train the actors? What types of people did you hire for your training team?

My team was chosen for the diversity of their specialties. The ones who are good with wires will train the actors on wire-work, those who are skilled in kung fu will train them in kung fu, and those who are good with weapons will teach the actors that.

When digital effects are an element of a fight scene, who usually makes the final call, the stunt coordinator or the digital artists? Does working with digital effects make your job easier or more difficult?

The director has the final say. We design the action and show him how it looks, then he looks at it and decides what he needs for the special effects. The final decision is his. There aren't any diffi-

HE KNOWS/G3

Yuen Wo-Ping is more than the martial arts master of "The Matrix" and "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." He is the man who changed the face of the Hollywood fight scene with his penchant for acrobatic wire-work. Now this brilliant fight

choreographer looks back

on his past and to the

future—more

specifically, the

upcoming "The Matrix

Reloaded" and "The

Matrix Revolutions."

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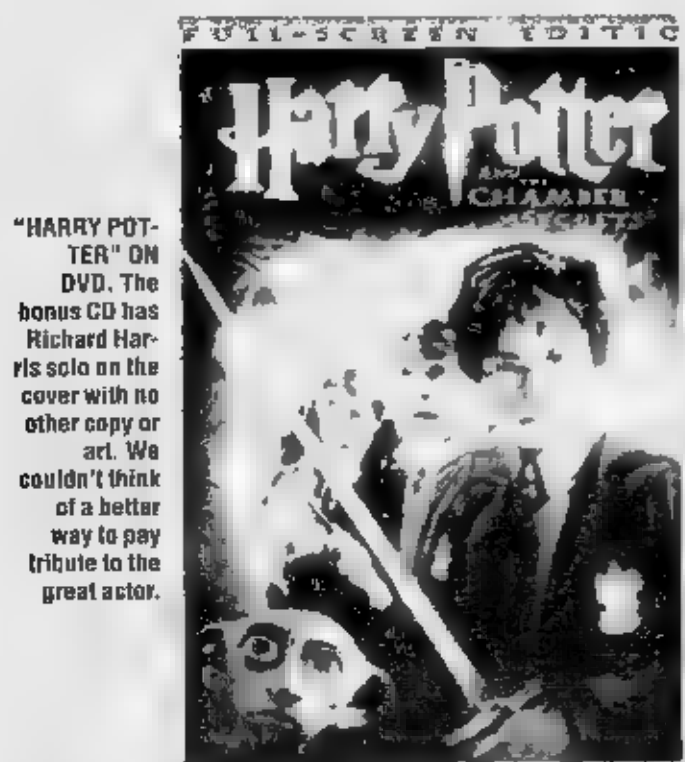
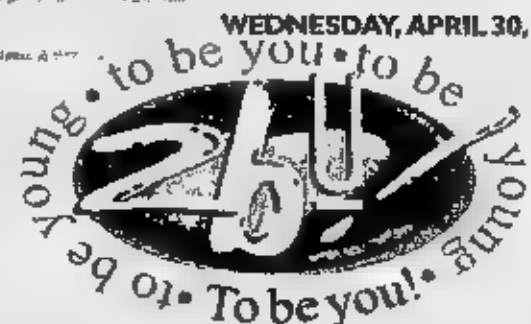
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2BU! THERMOMETER

'King Kong' remake is hot, kissing girl duo is not



"HARRY POTTER" ON DVD. The bonus CD has Richard Harris solo on the cover with no other copy or art. We couldn't think of a better way to pay tribute to the great actor.

GOODIES AND SWEETS. We love their personal-size cakes. Pam loves their Cheese Sampler and mango desserts, and Maui can't get enough of their Strawberry Shortcake and Strawberry Mousse.

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THE PALANCA AWARDS. Today's the deadline for aspiring and accomplished writers to make a bid for the country's foremost literary prize. So have you submitted your masterpiece?

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SELF-TANNERS. For those who haven't baked under the sun this summer, they have exactly one month to buy a bottle and convince everyone they have a gorgeous (and healthy!) tan.

NATALIE PORTMAN. Our sources say the Harvard student is now Kamiseta's new image model. We're hoping local clothing brands would use local talents more, though.



THE SIMS SUPERSTAR. Computer geeks and closet addicts will soon add more life to their simulated denizens with this expansion pack.

"KING KONG RE-TURNS." Next year, Peter Jackson ("Lord of the Rings") will direct his version of the Kong legend. The new generation probably doesn't know about the love story between a woman and an oversized gorilla, but with the remake, it



T.A.T.U. Avril was bad, this act is worse. We hate record companies "styling" their artists with stupid and degrading gimmicks, like making them kiss each other—even if they happen to be girls.



EVIL SALESPeOPLE. Enough said.

STUPID DRIVERS. There's a reason there are signs that say "NO ENTRY," "EXIT," "NO PARKING" and "NO U-TURN."



"FRIENDS" GET THEIR "SOUP" If you miss Aisha Tyler of "Talk Soup" on the E! channel, you're in for a surprise. She will soon debut on "Friends" as the hot babe caught between Joey's and Ross' undying affection.

At long last! Finally!

By Maui V. Reyes
2BU! Correspondent

"SA Wakas!" is the perfect title for Sugarfree's debut album. The band took more than a year to get its baby out in the market, having to play countless gigs and record company scoutings in between.

Now with the singles "Manposá" and "Telepono" getting constant radio airplay, drummer Mitch Sungson, bassist Jai Taguibao and guitarist and vocalist Ebe Dancel are finally getting the recognition they deserve.

2BU! tosses 20 questions to Ebe, who refuses to say what his guilty pleasure is.

1. If you were to design your own surgical mask, what would it look like?

Like a bass drum. It would look funny.

2. When did you realize that the tooth fairy wasn't real?

You mean she's not?

3. What do you know for sure?

That I am turning 27 in a month.

Sugarfree's Ebe Dancel answers 20 totally random questions for 2BU!

4. What did you have for breakfast today?

I didn't eat breakfast today. *Inubas* *yung pagkain dito sa bahay*. But usually I eat eggs. Lots of eggs. And tocino.

5. What's the worst gift you've ever received in your entire life?

Nobody gives me gifts, man.

6. When was the last time you cried and why?

Nung natapos 'yung album namin. I went to the little boy's room and cried.

7. If a man from the moon were to land in your backyard, what would you do?

Have him checked for SARS.

8. What's the first thing you'll rescue if your house is on fire?

My guitar. Because I just bought it two days ago and I have no more mon-

ey, as in no more. I have, like, 20 bucks in my wallet.

9. Do you remember what your favorite childhood toy was?

Hindi kasi kami bumibili ng toys nung bata kami. But my cousin had this action figure, si *Optimus Prime*. So I'd stare at it every day.

10. What are your plans for this weekend?

I'm going to Olongapo and then to Baguio and then to Enchanted Kingdom. But that's just for gigs.

11. What CDs are in your player now?

I'm listening to the new Zwan album, the new Foo Fighters, and the Itchyworms' demo. And Boldstar's album.

12. Complete this sentence: If I could, I'd...

Rid the world of SARS.

13. What are your top three favorite vacation destinations?

Puerto Galera, *ang ganda ng beach, man*. My hometown in Isabela, because all my relatives buy me beer. And my room. *'Di na ako nakakatambay sa room ko, eh*.

14. What were you like in high

school?

I was a geek, man. I was a loser. Total reject. I was the weird kid. *Lagi lang ako nakatulala*.

15. You'd rather stay at home and clean your room than go to whose concert?

Any Supply. Please, enough.

16. If you could undo one thing in your life, what would it be?

I should have taken college seriously. Because now I don't have a job and I don't have money. Make an example out of me.

17. What do you do at night when you're bored?

Nangungulit ako ng mga katibigan ko na makipag-inuman.

18. How old were you when you had your first heartbreak?

I was 12. She didn't like me, she liked someone else. She's married now in the US.

19. Where do you see yourself in 10 years?

Married in the US.

20. When was the last time you said "I love you" to someone?

Thirty minutes ago—to my cousin.



SUGARFREE vocalist Ebe Dancel
PHOTO: ALDWIN ASPILERA

He knows kung fu and then some

From page G1

culties. The director will tell us what he wants: for instance, in one scene in a garden, Neo starts fighting someone but as he fights, the person multiplies until there are about 100 of him. Then, we'll just go and work out how the fight scene should look. Once we get the director's "okay," we'll go ahead with that.

Are you using more weapons? Does that present a bigger challenge with digital effects? Did you have to compromise some authenticity to make the action look better with digital effects?

I've never worried about digital effects. The Wachowski brothers are very clear about how they want a scene to look. They give very specific instructions and explain what they expect the digital effects to do, so we just match the action with the effects. The digital effects didn't pose a problem. The action is usually designed to look as good as possible anyway.

Audiences have waited a while for "The Matrix" sequels (the first film was released in 1999), so anticipation and expectations on "Matrix Reloaded" and "Matrix Revolutions" are running particularly high. Has that increased the pressure on you?

Actually, there wasn't much pressure. After I finished "The Matrix," I went straight to "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon." When I made the latter, I had no pressure because when I was making "The Matrix," no one could have imagined it would make so much money around the world. No one could have predicted that "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" could have done so well in the US either. It came as a pleasant shock. So I don't let the pressure get to me. The director tells me what he wants and I just design the action to go with his vision. I don't think feeling stressed about it will help the situation.

Your work in "The Matrix" has obviously had an effect on the look of other films; even "Shrek" had a scene spoofing some of its action. How do you feel when you see your work influencing movies that have been made since "The Matrix" was released?

They're only copying the film and the director's vision. Actually, I think it is a good thing and it's quite amusing to see a film being copied like that. It is a kind of honor. You have to be good before other people will copy from you.

Your contribution to "The Matrix" is obvious. How has the film enhanced you both professionally and personally?

The film has actually done a lot for Hong Kong action. It has taken Hong Kong action out of its niche and presented it to the whole world, and now people are aware of how good Hong Kong action is. It is good for the development of the Hong Kong action genre.

Some critics would say that over-exposure of Hong Kong action films could be detrimental. What do you think?

That is true. There are pros and cons to everything. When something good comes along, other people will hop on the bandwagon and work the genre to death. It then turns the audience away. This is the natural cycle.

Three films have brought your talents to the attention of US film lovers: "The Matrix," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" and "Iron Monkey." How did the experience of working on these three films differ for you?

I never, ever thought I would one day be tackling the US market. For instance, when I made "Iron Monkey" all those years ago, my only consideration was to make a movie that could satisfy the audience and my bosses. After I finished the movie, I knew I was satisfied with it. It was a good movie. After making "The Matrix," I told the directors that I was quite confident that the film would do well—although I never imagined it would be as influential as it had become. So it was all a shock. The success of "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon" in the US was an even bigger shock. When I make my films, I just do my best to give the highest quality. I know that if I do my best then it would never be below-par. I'm very conservative; I usually tell myself if the success reaches a certain level, I would be very happy already. I never dreamed of the kind of success that the films had. There's no sure thing in this business. If there was, and I knew a certain film would do that well, I'd pawn my last belongings to be the boss! My responsibility is to the boss. If the film does well, they are happy and I'm satisfied.

What was it like working with the Wachowski brothers? Ang Lee used to say that he would make unreasonable requests because he didn't understand the limitations of the action. Were the Wachowski brothers the same?

The Wachowski brothers understand action movies very well. With Ang, I knew some of his requests were undoable so I would tell him. Or I would tell him that something he thought was spectacular was really quite common in the industry. The Wachowski brothers didn't make requests in that sense. Most of the time, they would actually tell me what they expected from the sequence. We'd demonstrate what we'd choreographed and they would ask us to make whatever changes they needed. Their method of filming is quite different from other American directors; in fact, their style is closer to the Hong Kong style. For instance, Hollywood directors usually use several cameras to film an action sequence. The Wachowski brothers only used one camera. That's what we do in Hong Kong. They'll find the best angle and work from there, unless the scene is especially dangerous or had complicated effects.

How much of your own kung fu did you utilize in the choreography of "Matrix Reloaded" and "Matrix Revolutions"?

Not much. I have realized that what you learn in actual kung fu is of little use when you transplant that in front of a camera. You have to add some creative moves to it. What we learn is very staid, it doesn't change. But in movies, things are changing constantly, so you actually have to match the action with the characters and storylines and the scenes. You have to be more versatile.

You've worked with both Asian and Hollywood actors. Have you noticed any difference in how these two groups respond to your training?

It's not a big difference. It's just the Asian style of fighting and the western style are different. Asian stars are usually more familiar with doing action so they really don't need much training, but Hollywood stars need to be trained. If they are not trained, they don't look good. Of course, you get a lot more time to work with western actors unlike in Hong Kong where you have prac-



ENTER the dragons.

tically no time to work on their action. The Hong Kong solution is also quite simple: Can't fight? Just use a stunt double! With "The Matrix," the Wachowski brothers wanted the actors to do all their own stunts. Keanu had to fight in over 30 scenes so he needed to have longer training time. At the end of the day, it all depends on the director's expectations.

Movie critics and fans often associate you with wire-work. How far do you think wire-work can still be pushed creatively?

There's always room for change. Even when it reaches what we feel is the limit, we can always use computer effects to enhance it again and add more interesting aspects to it. Computer effects are one thing and action is another, but packaging the two together will give rise to something more interesting.

When considering work on new projects, what are your criteria now? Has that changed since doing the "Matrix" films? Is the "East-meets-West" element an appealing factor?

As long as I feel that I can do something interesting in a project, I would take it. The East-meets-West concept is very difficult. I think it fails more often than it works, unless it is a film like "The Matrix" where the elements are all western and then they just add the Hong Kong action element. When it comes to mixing eastern and western actors, it's hard to make it work unless the script is exceptionally well-written.

In the first "Matrix" film, none of the actors had any martial arts experience, but in the

two sequels you used two karate experts, Neil and Adrian Raimont, as actors. Was it easier to design the action sequences around them?

We didn't feature any karate in the sequels. They used other forms of fighting but they were good. Their action was very clean and they delivered what was expected. They caught up faster but they still had to undergo training.

What was it like working with Keanu this time around?

He has improved a lot in the second and third parts. He still had to undergo a lot of training but then he had a lot more action in the sequels and he also had to train with weapons. In the first part, his fights were mainly hand-to-hand combat and one-on-one fights. In the sequels, he has a harder time because in one scene, he has to take on 100 people at once.

What was it like training Jada Pinkett-Smith?

She joined the cast later in the preparation period so we didn't have as much time with her as with the other actors. Having said that, she spent two months training, which was long enough for us to train her and make her fighting scenes look good.

You spent a lot of time training the protagonists of the movie; did the villains get as much training time?

Yes, they spent the same amount of time training but they didn't train together. We just separated them into different groups.

What is coming up for you? I'm taking a rest.



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Meet Addict Mobile

Addict Mobile is another first from the innovative minds behind SMART Communications. It is essentially a revolutionary mobile service specially designed for the sportive and radical youth market with a burning passion for life, offering exclusive multimedia content that defines the youthful and active lifestyle of today. In effect, Addict Mobile gives you the power to access a wide range of data value added services (VAS), multimedia messaging service (MMS), and general packet radio service (GPRS) without having to pay on top of your monthly service fee. Plus, only Addict Mobile offers the Smart Amazing Phone—the only handset that is capable of handling packet data at incredibly fast speeds.

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The SMART Team

addict

Addict in Boracay (A clean and wholesome one, that is)

I had just received my new Addict SIM a week before and, to tell you the truth I was more than a little excited with the latest revolution in mobile services to hit town. I couldn't wait to click and surf away on the Addict Portal which promises everything for nearly all types of addicts—sports addicts, car addicts, lifestyle addicts, just name it.

The term addict connotes a powerful, overwhelming obsession. And that's just the way I feel about my interests, just as I'm sure everyone does. The name may be controversial, but Addict caters only to "clean" interests and not to the dark drug underworld from where the term may be rooted. Anyway, while moralists and naysayers split hairs on the name, I personally couldn't agree more with Addict as it applies to the one thing that makes life worth living—passion.

And it was exactly a passion for fun in the sun which led me to Boracay last April 17, 2003, High Noon for the official season in

summer partying. Addict by all accounts dominated the famous four kilometer stretch for the holidays. I had the famous cool white sands underfoot and a beach to all the Addict events, what more to ask?

The very day I got there, an Ultimate Frisbee tournament was happening right in front of Hey Jude. I had never seen anything like it, a version of touch football played with frisbees, "goals" scored when players made catches in opposing endzones. After that hot and sweaty action (the players were panting away) everybody deserved to cool off. What followed was a phenomenal Sunset Session by Anton Ramos, The Man behind the Chilton Project. Every track was perfect and inspirational, especially as another dramatic Boracay sunset dipped into history. Soon after, Hey Jude DJs followed up with Island Grooves, a bit more racy and up tempo.

zApril 18, Friday saw Jungle Beach Volleyball at the same venue, with no less

intense action. How do these volleyball addicts do it? Running, diving, and digging under the blazing sun? Guess that's Addict-ion in Action for you. Again, Hey Jude soothed and swayed the crowd with a FeelGood Session well into the night.

April 19, Saturday was Beach Football day and soccer Addicts kicked up the sand to lusty applause. Admittedly, I was there to witness the Slinky roadshow set to quake the beach with this London Club's distinctive Progressive House music. What a turmoil. What a party. Addict was prudent enough to post an anti-drugs sign by the dance stage to make a crucial point of distinction.

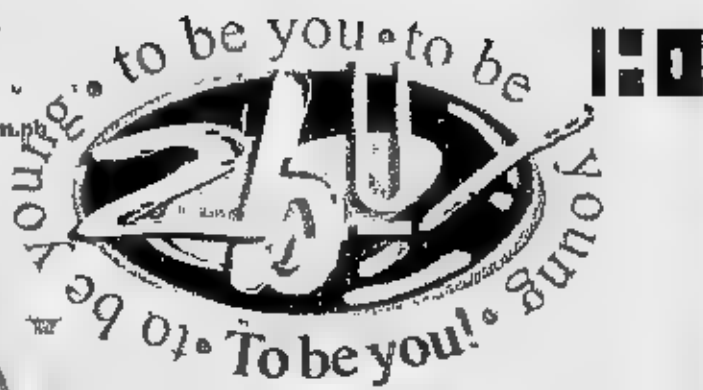
I can't and won't forget it, who would?



The SMART Team

addict

LIFESTYLE



Culinary nirvana

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Mike Alquinto

THE place lives up to its name. When you walk into Temple Bar and Restaurant, calmness descends upon you and wraps itself around your shoulders like the lightest of light blankets. A higher state of consciousness? Maybe.

It can be the soothing interiors. Or the large 9-foot bronze Buddha that is guarding the restaurant and its people. Then again, it can be the promise of good food. Really really good food.

Temple Bar isn't 23-year-old Erik Cua's first business venture. He first put up a coffee shop in Cainta when he was 19 and fresh out of De La Salle University where he took up Business Management. Then he established Jack's Loft in Eastwood, known for its sinful desserts and fish-bowl iced teas, and Basement, one of the more popular clubs in Libis.

Since it opened two months ago, Temple Bar has become a popular hangout for people who want to unwind after a long day. But the place has so much more to offer than cocktails and finger food. Temple Bar is home to so many mouthwatering dishes that are delightful to one's palate.

"The cuisine is Pan-Asian. It's a mix of Chinese, Vietnamese, Thai and Malaysian food."

Putting the menu together proved not to be hard for Erik because he comes from a family of food lovers. "We always like eating out. The items in the menu are really everything that we want. My mom takes care of the kitchen. She works hand in hand with the chef."

Best dishes

We sampled some of Temple

Bar's best dishes and were not at all disappointed. The meal started with the flavorful Hot and Sour Soup. The two salads we tried were both a treat for different reasons. The Tuna, Mango and Apple Salad with Raspberry Vinaigrette was refreshing. The almonds added texture to the already colorful combination of different tastes. Anyone who enjoys Peking duck will love Housin Chicken Salad.

Chili Shrimps, a hit at Temple Bar's launch, were even better than I remembered. They were topped with herbs that did not overpower the flavor of the juicy shrimps. Salmon with Hoisin and Black Bean Egg Roll was a new experience for our taste buds. The tasty slivers of salmon contrasted perfectly with the dark flavors of black beans and hoisin sauce.

Oriental Seafood Soba, which comes with a generous heap of toppings, was a discovery. Kung Pao Chicken is also a must-try. Our favorites, apart from the shrimps, were the Pan-Fried Haibut in Miso and Coriander with Vegetable Rice and Temple Roasted Garlic Crab with Garlic Noodles. The Pan-Fried Haibut was so tender and flaky. It literally melts in the mouth. The crab, which was so big and so meaty, was sinfully garlicky. The crab and garlic noodles were a heavenly match.

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TEMPLE Roasted Garlic Crab with Garlic Noodles

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RICE IN A BOX & PINOY FASTFOOD

Know the ins and outs of rice-in-box and Pinoy fastfood business this May. Learn about the licensing requirement, capitalization, basic equipment, layout, sourcing, storage and actual work presentation in putting up a food business. Be competitive and see how you per with other existing establishments by offering something new. Get into business now!

Rice in a Box Business: May 3 (Sat) 9-4 p.m. Lecture on the technical and operational aspects of business, food hygiene and sanitation, costing and actual demonstration of recipes: Drunken Chicken, Beef Tenderloin with Leeks, Crispy Porkchop, Spaghetti with Sweet & Spicy Sauce, Clams in Yellow Sauce by Sila Ram, Chef and Consultant P1,500

Pinoy Fastfood: (Celerieria, Pandoan, Lugawan, etc.) May 24 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lecture on the technical and operational aspects of the business, hygiene, sanitation & safety, costing and actual cooking demonstration of popular low cost fastfood recipes, different kinds of Lomi, Pork Assado, Fresh & Fried Lumpia, Pancit Malabon, Adobong Pusit, different kinds of BBQ, Cycle menu, sampler use of extenders, etc. P1,500

SUMMER WORKSHOPS FOR KIDS & TEENERS (Enrollment is on a first come, first served basis)
JUNIOR CULINARY WORKSHOP for boys and girls 6-10 years old, Kiddle Meal Specials: May 14 & 16 (W - Th) 8:30 a.m. - 12 nn. Edible Fish Ball, Mean & Lean Meatloaf, Potato Chip Chicken Fingers, Empanado Burger Rice, Baked Chicken Tomato Pasta, Rainbow Soup, Sweet & Sour Pops, Fish & Chips. Activity Workshop, colored and flavored pasta making & homemade play dough. P1,500
YOUNG PEOPLE'S COOK-IN (YPCI) for teens: Chocolate Galore: May 10 & 17 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Chocolate Chunk Banana Bars, Chocolate Cheese Cakes, Black & White Cookies, Trio of Chocolate Truffles, Chocolate Mousse, Chocolate Marzipan Fruit. Activity Workshop: Character color flow. P2,000

SPECIAL COURSES FOR ADULTS (First come, first served basis)
Baking with Institutional Mixes: May 10 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Assorted Brownies (Black Forest, Apple, Choc, Rocky Road), Pineapple Carrot Cake, Choco-Banana Loaf, Chocolate Muffins with Fudge Frosting, Hotdog on Slide, Buttered Squares and Chocolate Crinkles. P600

Japanese Cooking: May 17 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. Miso Soup, Mixed Tempura, Sukiyaki, Kamameshi, assorted Sushi: Kappamaki, Tekamaki, California Maki and Nigiri. P800
Gulaman, Delights: May 17 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Cathedral Window, Buko Pandan Salad, Moulded Fruit desserts, Icebox Cake. Bonus: edible centerpiece. P600

Kahating: May 24 (Sat) 1:30 - 5 p.m. Puto, Cuchinta, Cassava Bbingka, Pichi Pichi, Maja Blanca. Bonus: Maya Bbingka & Tamales. P600

CERTIFICATE COURSES WITH HANDS-ON (For Adults: Pre-registration required)

Cake Decorating (Basic): May 3 & 10 (Sat) 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. Lecture-workshop on fundamentals of cake decorating: coloring, designing, template, icing (booted, butter, caramel, chocolate, sugar icing), basic borders, jelly lettering, basic flower making and bunching and motif. Free decorating tips. P2,000

Baking I (Basic): Apr. 7-9 or 21-23 (W - F) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. Techniques in preparing basic pie crust, different types of cakes, quick bread, yeast breads and more. P2,000

Cooking I (Basic) For Messmen, Stewards and Beginners: May 13 - 16 or 27 - 30 (T - F) 1:30 - 5:00 p.m. Basic food preparation, cooking methods for vegetables, pasta, meats and poultry dishes; Techniques of do-boning chicken and fish; Basic garnishing. Actual preparation of popular Filipino and Oriental dishes. P2,500

Cooking II (Comprehensive Cooking) For Career Cooks: May 27 - 30 (T - F) 9:00 a.m. - 1 p.m. Coverage: Standard techniques of preparing basic stocks, soups and sauces applicable to 1001 recipes, salads and dressing; main dishes; potato cookery; pasta and rice; techniques of deboning and filleting fish and chicken; use of herbs and spices to cooking; basic garnish for plate and platter presentation. Free lunch. P3,000

For inquiries, visit the Maya Kitchen (Tuesdays thru Saturdays) at 8th floor, Liberty Building, A. Arnaiz Ave. (Pasay Road), Makati City or call tel. 892-1185 or 892-5011 loc. 108, or e-mail us at mayakitchen@pacific.net.ph

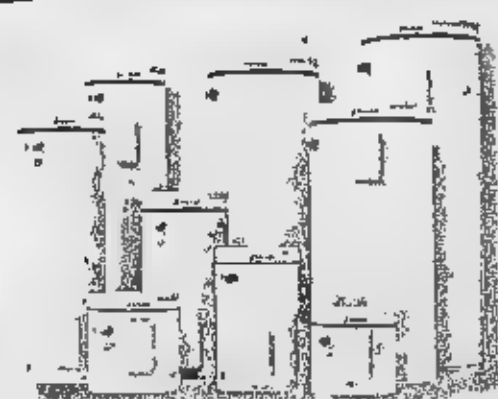


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C-I-X-T-O-R YAN ANG BINIBILI NI MOMMY!

TEMPLE
cheesecake in
blueberry



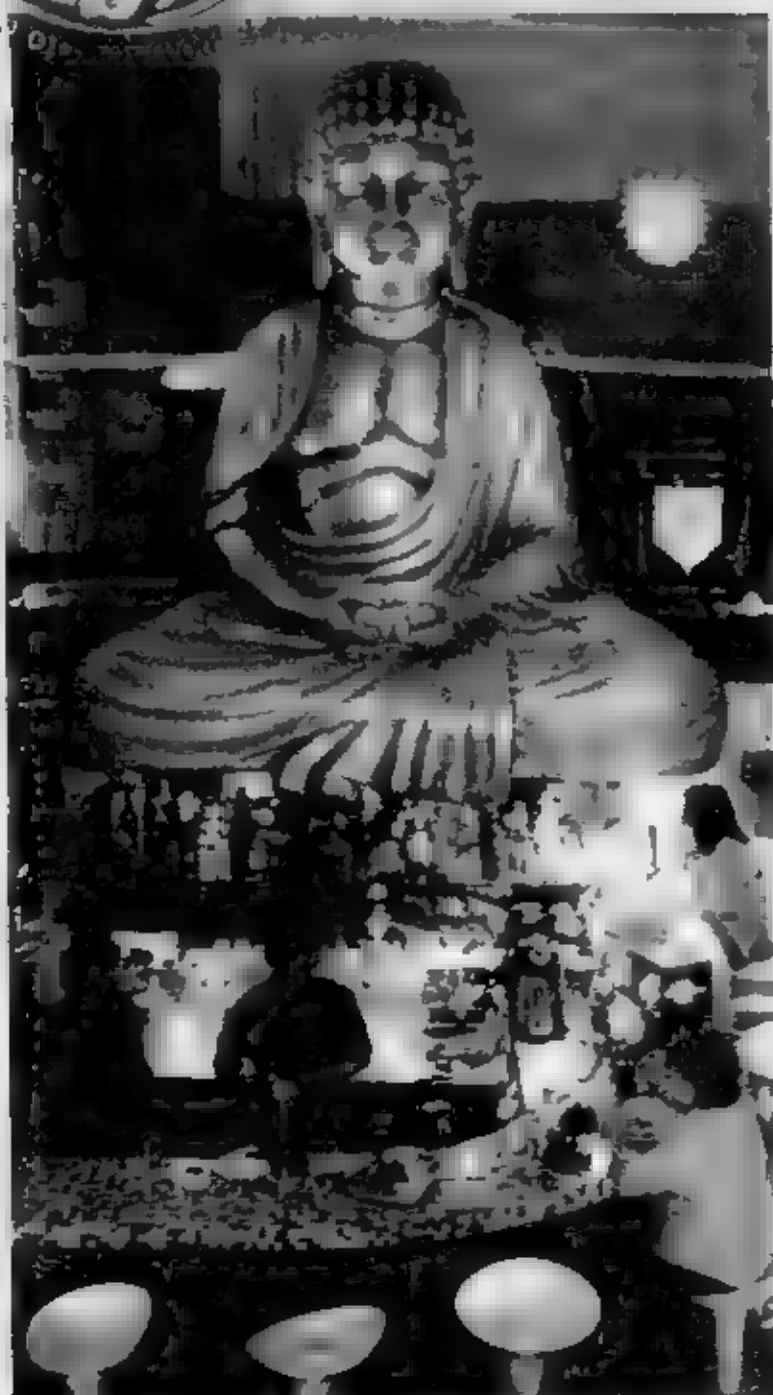
HEAVEN Sent
chocolate cake



SALMON with
Hoisin and Black
Bean Egg Roll



CHILI shrimps



BUDDHA, the 9-foot centerpiece of Temple Bar

Culinary nirvana

From page H1

The meal ended with Temple Cheesecake, which we ordered in blueberry (they also have mango and strawberry), and the Heaven Sent Chocolate Cake with Caramel Sauce. The cheesecake was light and creamy and the chocolate cake was moist and rich.

Needless to say, it was a very memorable meal.

The list doesn't end there. Temple Bar still has a lot of other dishes to offer palates looking for an adventure. We asked Erik to recommend an entire meal for first timers.

"Start with the Fried Spring Rolls or the Chicken Satay Skewers with Coco Peanut Sauce. Then have the Hoisin Chicken Salad, the Braised Pork in Shaosing Wine, Stir-Fry Rice and end the

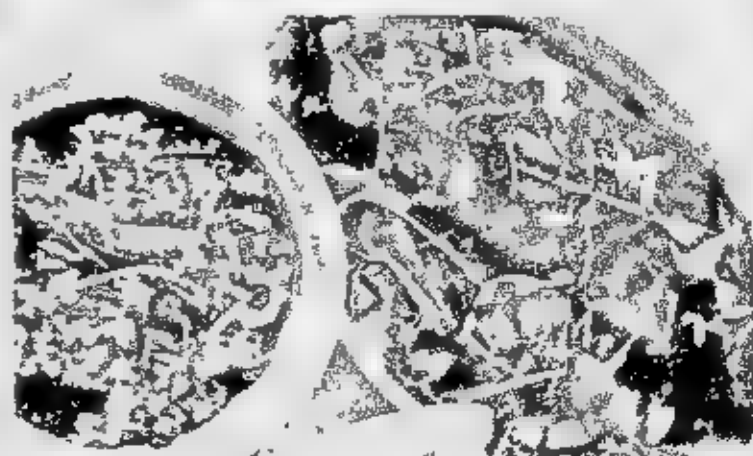


PORK in
Shaosing
Wine

TUNA, Mango
and Apple
Salad with
Raspberry
Vinaigrette



ORIENTAL
Seafood
Soba



PAN-FRIED Halibut in Miso and Coriander with Vegetable Rice

meal with Heaven Sent Chocolate Cake."

When asked to choose only one dish from the whole menu that he would have to eat everyday, Erik did not think twice. "The Braised Pork." This dish was a contradiction—the flavors were subtle and powerful at the same time.

Erik has more plans for Temple Bar. Theme nights and adding more items to the menu are on top of his list.

The prices are considerably reasonable. Erik made a point to see to that. "Good food, good value," he said with a smile.

This might be as close to culinary nirvana as one might get.

If this is the road to enlightenment, we'd gladly keep coming back.

E-mail the author at ppas-tor@inquirer.com.ph



ERIK Cua



THE ROAD to enlightenment

NEW VIDEOS ON THE BLOCK

The boys are back!

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
 2bU1 Correspondent

MUSICLANDIA'S men make a reappearing act. They look like the men that they are (boy-next-door, ruggedly handsome, badbadbad boys) and sound as if they've totally forgotten about their childhood days. Here's a review of their latest music videos dominating our channels.

"Rock Your Body"

by Justin Timberlake
 After crying a river and working it with band-aid boy Nelly, hottie Justin resurfaces with yet another undeniable winner, "Rock Your Body." Boasting of 9,000 bulb lights, the video is plotless and basic, with a rugged-looking and white-clad Justin singing and dancing. The vid is supposedly boring but the amazing editing and Justin's spectacular choreography surprisingly hypnotize you into watching the whole thing. With a string of good, catchy songs and magnificent moves you yourself want to execute inside a bathroom, Justin will surely go farther than most of us expect.

"The Remedy"

by Jason Mraz
 Another addition to the list of lads singing, songwriting and strumming in

Jason Mraz, who hails from Southern California. Currently making a splash with the single "The Remedy," Jason proves he's not just another drool-worthy face you want to create in your cell phone's picture editor. Give the song 10 seconds (the intro is pretty lengthy) and you'll be tapping your feet (clad in Islander slippers) until the song's last note.

Apart from his undeniably beautiful face, Jason's fashion sense is something that will definitely catch your attention, as proven in the vid of "The Remedy."

Garbed in cut-off slacks, puffy bedroom slippers, a coat with a pin and baseball cap, you wonder where this guy gets his clothes. But no matter how mismatched, eccentric, or uhm, jologs his fashion statement is, you can't help but forgive him. Who else can wear green tee and red baseball cap and not make you laugh because Christmas is definitely hundreds of sleep away?

Going back to the video, nothing much happens. He just rides a chicken-filled Mrazda, comes across a boobsy girl who has a brown bag of eggs and slips, and inserts a couple of sunflowers into a soldier's gun.

Last words: More catchy songs and more close-ups please. And maybe a lesson on how his surname is pronounced

(Ma-raz? Em-raz? Uhm, Mwaz???)

"Year 3000"

by Busted

Composed of blokes Charlie, Mattie and James, the latest addition to the never-ending list of boy bands is the group Busted, which sounds like the Moffatts, Blink 182 and LFO in a blender. Pretty and pleasant-looking, the video for "Year 3000" sees the boys transported to year 3000 (you guessed it right) where they see their future selves, still as pop stars. They steal the spotlight, make love to their guitars, jump—and all of a sudden, they freeze in the air, turn black and you see "Busted" onscreen. Yawn. Yippee.

"If You're Not The One"

by Daniel Bedingfield

Twenty-two-year-old control freak Daniel made sure he had his hands and feet during the whole process of producing his album "Gotta Get Thru This," wherein he wrote most of the songs, sang and played instruments—in his underpants.

Born in New Zealand, Daniel is back after the title track, with the tear-jerking "If You're Not The One." Beautiful and brilliant, the video is unfortunately not the same case. Without a plot, we just see Mr. Bedingfield standing, sitting down,



ILLUSTRATION: STEPH BRAVO

jumping, falling and staring directly at us. Kinda creepy, and definitely boring. Sure made me want to just close my eyes.

"Come Undone"

by Robbie Williams

The man has returned, much to the delight of many, and the latest offering is yet another hit, joining the likes of his previous ones "Angel" and "She's The One." The video is vibrant and colorful. It's a lively visual feast that starts with Robbie waking up sandwiched between a couple of supermodels. As he walks out of the house that looks like Tim Yap's, what follows is a flashback of what happened the previous night, which includes

lots of booze consumption, physical contact and fistfight.

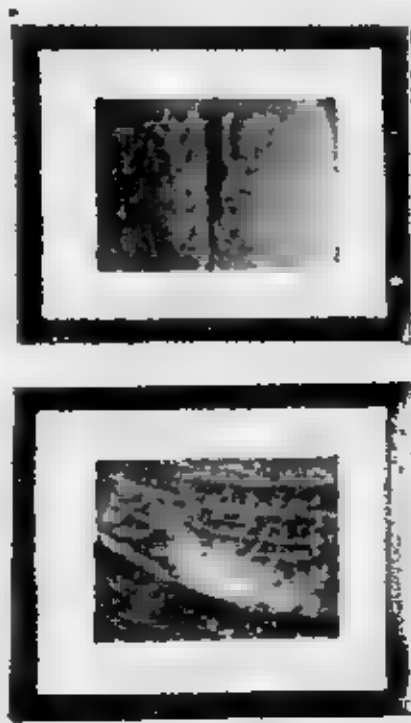
The vid's highlight is the guest appearance of creepy crawlies: huge bugs, rats, worms and snakes coming out of skirts and mouths. Double yuck.

Other manly music vids on heavy rotation in music channels: "Somewhere I Belong" by Linkin Park (with the special participation of robots and long-legged creatures), "Rise And Fall" by Craig David (with the special participation of Sting), and "Unwell" by Maroon 5 (with the special participation of a dog and elephant feet).

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com



MUSIC and art fuse at Penguin



MISHKA'S wall of art



SCRAMBLED Edge and DJ Mei-Lwun

Easter 'G' at Bora with BBC

GENTXT, Studio 23 and BBC filed the shores of Boracay island with sunflowers and "G" signs this summer as BBC, or Big Ben Collective, composed of scene mover, DJ Scrambled Edge Pamute, Kara Tolentino and Mike Constantino, popular for their Novalounge se-

rics, rocked the scene at Pier 1. Gina Rene and DJ Mei Lwun of Soulstice, San Francisco played alternately with DJ Daniel Magg from Germany and Minus 8 of Switzerland. All in all, it was a truly global dance feat in the shores of our favorite summer destination.



KARA Tolentino and DJ Mei-Lwun of Soulstice

Multifaceted young artist

By Amanda Virrey
Contributor

It was a festive April Fool's Night when Mishka Arellano-Adams' exhibit opened. The Penguin Café was transformed into an art and music festival. The ongoing exhibit, "Myopic Glimpses," features 44 artworks.

The ceremony began with Mishka's verbal demonstration of her work and the lighting of incense to signify peace and good luck. There was also a poetry reading recited by Mishka's mom, Agnes Arellano-Adams. The poem written by Mishka was for the roadie of Razorback, Butoy, who died of severe complications last month.

The artist also sang songs like "Cry Me a River," "Fever" and "They All Laughed," and was backed up by the country's renowned musicians. The highlight of the event, however, was the eclectic collaboration of musicians who made the crowd dance to samba, bossa nova, blues and jazz. Among the musicians were Bihe Bonnetie, Dante Bosch, Jun Claudio, Nino Hernandez, Arnold Casinto, Sammy Asuncion, Louise Talan, Fritz Barth and Deo Arellano.

Myopic photography

Mishka got the idea of myopic photography while she was fiddling with a camera and zeroed in on a tree trunk. Looking through the magnified lens, she was amazed by the beauty of its minute details. From then on, she decided that she wanted to show everybody "what we never had the time to see." She took shots of a wooden banister, window curtain, an altar at her house, cooked white rice, beach sand, pebbles, and just about anything she could see in full zoom.

Foundation

Growing up with a family of artists motivated Mishka to be an artist herself. Her mom, Agnes Arellano-Adams, is famous for the sculpture of "Three Goddesses" and a pregnant figure called, "Haliya Bathung." She also has works displayed in Africa and Asia. On the other hand, her dad, Michael Adams, used to own "Pinaglabanan Gallery" with her mom in San Juan, which showcased works by various artists.

At the age of three, she began drawing pictures of animated characters on papers, walls and even floors. The first of which was a picture of Mickey Mouse in the garden. She also assisted her mom in sculpting dead trees, clay casting and painting. They would paint different figures on their Volkswagen Kombi Van and drive around the country to show their work. With that fresh and lively outlook in life, Mishka was sent to a boarding school in England where she stayed for 8 years.

Future

At 18, Mishka still wants to learn more. She is honing her painting skills and wants to study photography full-time. Just like her concept of myopic photography, Mishka feels that there's so much more to discover and experience in life.

Mishka's works are exhibited at Penguin Café in Malate until today.

Mishka's Poem for Butoy
When you left our world to join the sky
You painted colors in our eyes
And now I stand there in the mountain
Bruised by wind and rain
But I still can't see you here
Through the midst of our pain

So here I am surrounded by the sky
The clouds embrace me till I cannot see
Now I feel blind as the cold seeps into my skin
My spirit ignites and I realize that here you are
You are everywhere
You are the air

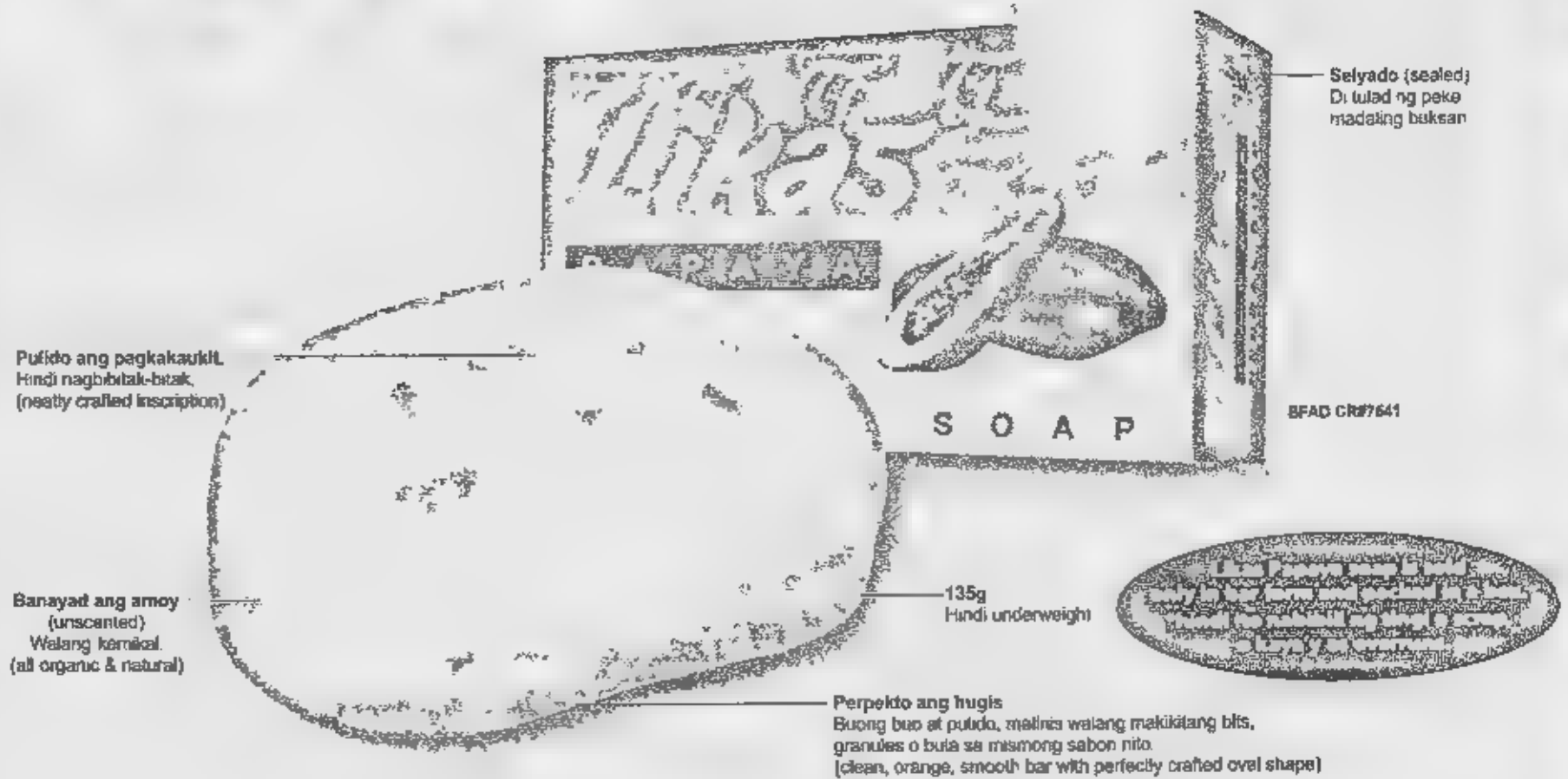
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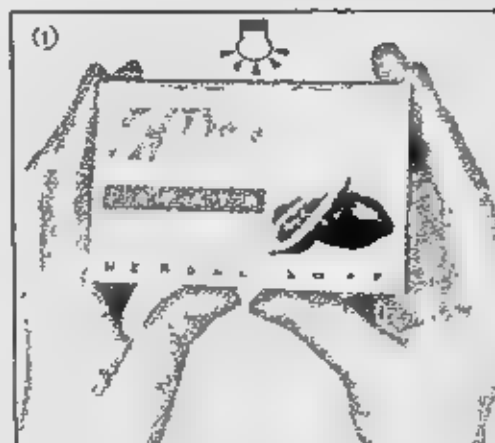
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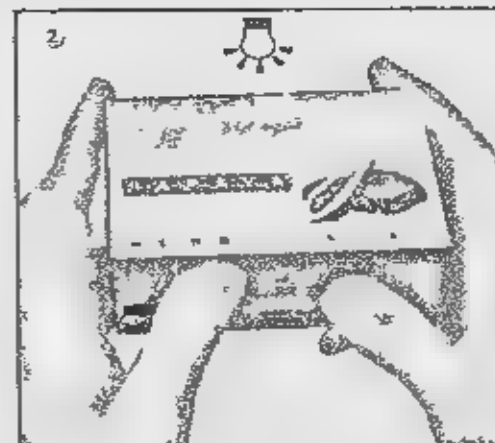
135g
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Perpekto ang hugis
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(clean, orange, smooth bar with perfectly crafted oval shape)

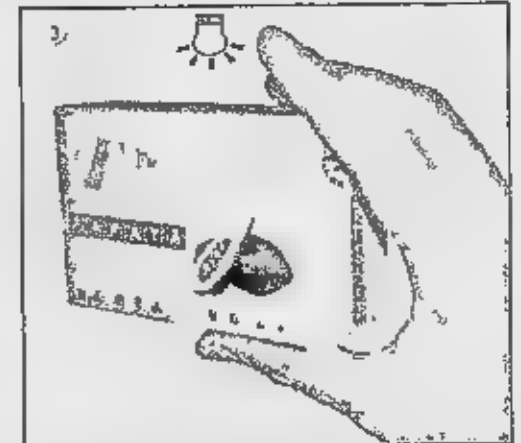
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TOAST TO ART! Budetha Casinto,
percussionist for Pinikpikan and Spy

BY JESS ABRERA



BY PM. ILNIOR



BY PATRICK McDONNELL

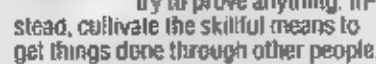
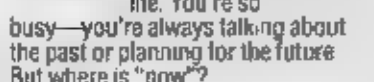
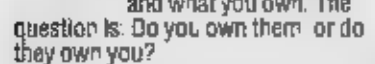


BY STEVEN PABALINA



BY FRANCIS DRAKE

— **ARIES** (March 21 to April) **GEMINI** (May 21 to June)



ACROSS

-
- A 15x15 crossword puzzle grid. The grid is labeled with numbers 1 through 15 in the top-left corner, indicating the starting positions for the words. The grid is composed of white squares for letters and black squares for non-letters.

By Norm Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

4/30/03

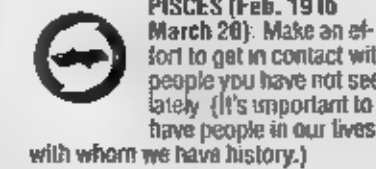
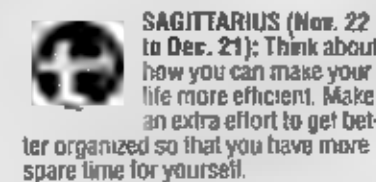
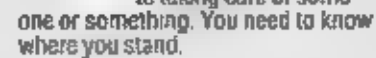
Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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BY DANIEL SHELTON



BY JOM KE TE:ID



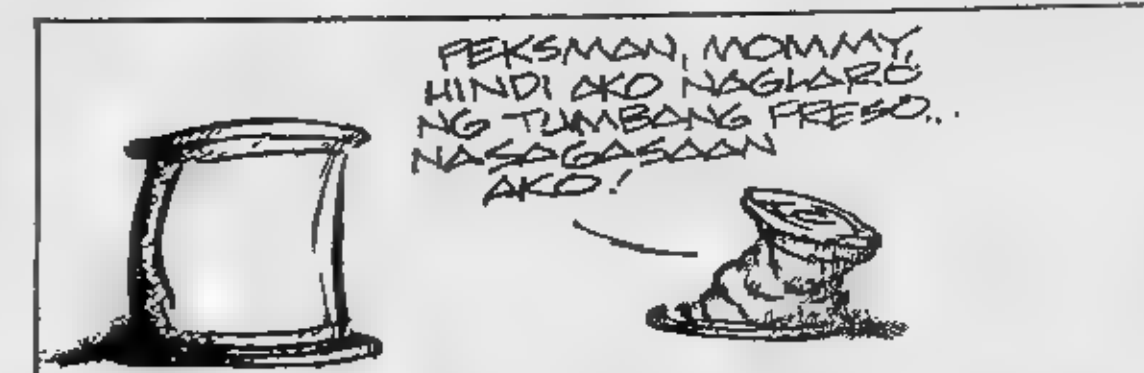
BY MANIX ABRE



BY ELIZABETH CHIONG



BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBLIN



SARS:

Aries Espinosa, Editor
Len de los Reyes, Account Manager
Alden Joshua Cedo, Graphic Artist

The unseen enemy

The virus that rocked the world

THE WORLD was hounded by two crises last month which both divided and united the nations of the world: the first being the war in Iraq that saw the clashing of views of heads of states, and the second one was the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Both claimed hundreds of lives.



Although the war in Iraq ended after a few weeks, the battle to at least contain SARS is keeping health officials on their feet. SARS was earlier known as atypical pneumonia. The last time a flu epidemic wiped out millions of people worldwide was in 1918.

But advance technology and the governments' cooperation hopefully will stop the chain reaction-like spread of SARS.

The Philippine government was jolted by the first case of SARS with the death of nursing aide from Canada, Adela Catalon, and her father, Mauricio, this month. And on Monday, Malacañang described the situation of SARS as a national emergency. The Philippines is the ninth country in the world classified as "SARS-infected" with three reported confirmed cases as of this writing. The suspected case in Samar that brought the country's case to four was later found negative.

As of April 28, the World Health Organization listed 5,014 suspected SARS cases, and a confirmed death toll of 330 worldwide.

Is there a cause for panic, or even paranoia? SARS is spreading at a lightning pace. It can put down even the healthiest of adults. The WHO website reported that most patients identified have been previously healthy adults aged 25-70 years old. But the most alarming was the fact that experts had little knowledge about the disease, until weeks ago.

The pressing need to identify the virus that causes SARS had put a team of Canadian scientists to work. In a matter of seven weeks, SARS was named and the virus that causes it is believed to belong to the family of coronaviruses. Coronaviruses are the second most common cause of colds and are

known to survive in the environment for up to three hours.

Symptoms of SARS include fever greater than 38°C, dry cough, shortness of breath, headache, or sometimes muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, malaise, confusion, rash and diarrhea. Before, these are considered common signs of flu, but at the rate the death toll is going, even a simple cough can be a cause for alarm, or could even draw nervous stares from people.

Quarantine of suspected SARS-infected people, or those who have close contacts with them, is the best option health officials can give the public so far. Travelers who arrive from SARS-infected countries or provinces are required to undergo voluntary quarantine of up to 10 days.

It is believed that the virus spreads easily through close contact with an infected person or is transmitted through objects contaminated by SARS. The duration between exposure and emerging of symptoms is estimated from two to seven days.

Health workers wear facemasks and protective gear when caring for suspected SARS cases.

In an attempt to curb the spread of the virus, doctors resorted to using anti-body tests, molecular tests and cell culture to identify the coronavirus in blood samples of suspected cases. This method, however, have been found to be inefficient. To determine if a victim is producing antibodies to fight SARS through blood tests, it will take at least two to three weeks.

So far, there is still no known cure for the disease. All the health officials have are preventive measures. It was earlier reported that it would take 10-15 years before a vaccine can be developed against SARS, but on Monday a US health official said it is only a year away. **Compiled by Marlet D. Salazar**

"the best prevention of SARS is to regularly wash your hands"

Malik Peiris
Chief of Virology
Department of Microbiology
University of Hong Kong

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for your health from
Dial Antibacterial Products.**

Dial
ANTIBACTERIAL



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Where to go in case of SARS infection

ALTHOUGH the government has designated the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM) and San Lazaro Hospital to handle suspected SARS cases, below is a list obtained from the Department of Health website, of medical centers and regional hospitals people can go to in the event of infection of SARS.

Metro Manila

San Lazaro Hospital San Lazaro Compound, Sta. Cruz, Manila 732-3776 to 78; 732-3106711-6966; 711-8979 fax Research Institute for Tropical Medicine Alabang, Muntinlupa City 809-7599; 807-2636; 842-2828807-2634; 807-2628 to 32; 842-2245

Region I

Ilocos Regional Training Center San Fernando, La Union (072) 888-5864 Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital and Medical Center Batang, Ilocos Norte (077) 792-3133

Region II

Veterans Regional Hospital Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya (078) 321-2090 Cagayan Valley Medical Center Tuguegarao, Cagayan (078) 844-1410

Region III

Jose B. Lingad Memorial General Hospital San Fernando, Pampanga (045) 961-3921 Dr. Paulino Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija (044) 463-8286

Region IV

Batangas Regional Hospital Batangas City, Batangas

Region V

Bicol Regional Training and Teaching Hospital Legaspi City, Albay Bicol Medical Center Naga City, Camarines Sur

Region VI

Western Visayas Regional Hospital Bacolod City, Negros Occidental (034) 433-1591 Western Visayas Medical Center Mandurriao, Iloilo City, Iloilo

Region VII

Gov. Celestino Gallares Memorial Hospital Tagbilaran City, Bohol (038)

411-4831 Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center Cebu City, Cebu (032) 253-9891

Region VIII

Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center Tacloban City, Leyte del Norte

Region IX

Dr. Jose Rizal Memorial Hospital Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte

Region X

Margosatubig Regional Hospital Margosatubig, Zamboanga del Sur Zamboanga City Medical Center Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur

Region XI

Mayor Hilarion Ramiro Sr. Regional Training and Teaching Hospital Ozamis City, Misamis Occidental (088) 521-0022 Northern Mindanao Medical Center Cagayan de Oro City, Misamis Oriental (088) 728829

Region XII

Davao Regional Hospital Tagum City, Davao del Norte Davao Medical Center Bajada, Davao City (082) 227 2731 Region XII Cotabato Regional and Medical Center Cotabato City, North Cotabato

CAR

Luis Hora Memorial Regional Hospital Abatan, Bauko, Mt. Province Baguio General Hospital and Medical Center Baguio City ARMM Amari Pakpak Medical Center Marawi City, Lanao del Sur

CARAGA Caraga Regional Hospital Surigao City, Surigao del Norte (086) 826-2459 Adela Serra Ty Memorial Medical Center Tandag, Surigao del Sur (086) 211-3700

BIOGESIC FEVERWATCH FEVER MANAGEMENT IN THE TIME OF PNEUMONIA

What Is Pneumonia?

Pneumonia is a disease that occurs when the lungs get inflamed, usually due to infection. It's a more common problem than most people think. Usually it's a mild disease, but some forms are very dangerous and require a consultation with a doctor. An example is the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS, whose cause and cure have yet to be discovered. About 30 different kinds of germs infect the lungs and cause pneumonia. Infected lungs leak fluids and shed dead cells. This material clogs up air sacs and makes it hard for the lungs to do their job of getting oxygen into the blood. Without enough oxygen, none of the cells in your body work as they should.

Pneumonia can affect just one section of the lung or many sections of the lung. When both lungs are affected, it's called double pneumonia. Pneumonia generally lasts about two weeks. But it may take a month or more for the infected lung or lungs to clear up. Thus, when recovering from pneumonia, even healthy people may feel tired or weak.

Causes

Viruses cause about half of all cases of pneumonia. Bacteria are the most common cause of pneumonia in adults over the age of 30. Fungi can also cause pneumonia. Many of these germs are all around us. They usually can't get past a healthy person's natural defenses. That's why pneumonia is most common in elderly people, in cigarette smokers, in alcoholics, and in people suffering from other diseases such as the flu.

Symptoms

- Viral pneumonia usually comes with a combination of low fever and chills, muscle aches, fatigue, enlarged lymph nodes in the neck, chest pain, sore throat, and coughing. The cough generally brings up only a small amount of mucus.
- Bacterial pneumonia usually comes with a combination of high fever, cough with thick greenish or rust-colored mucus, shortness of breath, rapid breathing, sharp chest pain that is worse with deep breaths, abdominal pain, and severe fatigue. There can be profuse sweating and mental confusion.

- In children, labored and rapid breathing (more than 45 breaths a minute), sudden onset of fever, cough, wheezing, and bluish skin, lips, or fingertips are general signs of pneumonia.
- Mycoplasma pneumonia is often very benign and resolves without any treatment. Symptoms can consist of violent attacks of coughing that bring up only a small amount of mucus. There are chills and fever; some people get nausea or vomiting. Some patients become very weak for up to a month.

Fever as a symptom and why it should be managed at the onset

"Fever as a symptom of pneumonia should always be managed at the onset"

Fever is a common symptom among the kinds of pneumonia. That's because fever is, by itself, the body's warning signal that there is an infection. It is very important that fever not be ignored so that a disease, whether pneumonia or not, can be detected and further complications be avoided. In the case of pneumonia, the best thing to do is to manage your fever at the first sign.

Managing Fever at the Onset
Whether it's mild or high, you should take Paracetamol like Biogesic to help alleviate your suffering from fever. Drink plenty of fluids and avoid physical and mental stress. It is also advisable to dress in light clothing so that you feel comfortable and your temperature can stabilize. After managing your fever, this does not mean that the rest of the symptoms should be taken lightly.

When to consult a doctor

- Your symptoms indicate you have any form of pneumonia. In many instances, you need immediate treatment to recover and avoid complications.
- Your sharp chest pain does not get better with prescribed treatment; you have increased shortness of breath, or your fingernails, toenails, or skin becomes dark or develop a bluish tinge after diagnosis. Your lungs are not getting enough oxygen and you need medical assistance.
- You cough up blood; you may need additional treatment for a worsening infection.

PARACETAMOL
BIOGESIC

China leads numbers of SARS cases

Fever as a symptom and why it should be managed at the onset

Managing Fever at the Onset

When to consult a doctor

PARACETAMOL
BIOGESIC

Oplan: Bantay Kalusugan spreading faster than SARS

WITH the onslaught of SARS in various Asian countries, the cliché "prevention is better than the cure" has never been more real to us Filipinos. The SARS death toll worldwide has caused great fear among Filipinos.

This disease is known to spread through the transfer of respiratory liquids. A common cough and cold cannot be taken lightly anymore. And everywhere you go there is the threat of the SARS virus. From the handrail of a public vehicle, to the elevator, the doorknobs may not be as innocent as it looks.

You are not even sure of the diseases you might be bringing home to your children and other family members.

Members of the private sector have responded to the threat. And Green Cross Inc. has been most active in protecting the health of Filipinos.

On April 21, Green Cross Inc. launched its Oplan: Bantay Kalusugan Handog ng

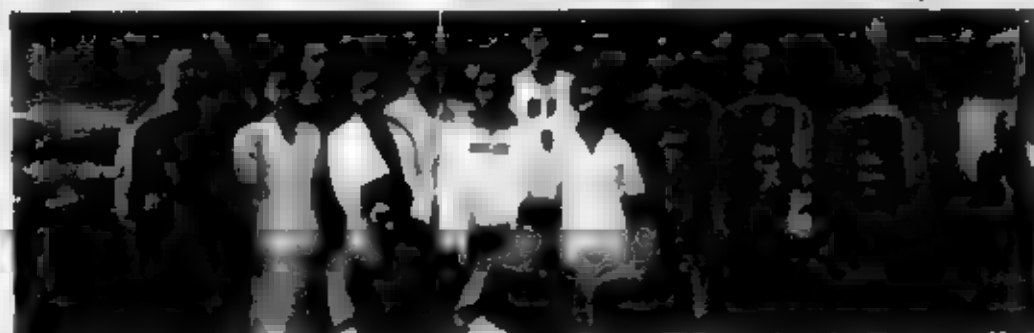


A young boy having himself checked in Marikina, Marikina.

THE OPLAN Bantay Kalusugan Mobile van during the morning set-up before the proper Oplan Clinic starts. Location is at Quezon City



VICE Mayor Herbert Bautista and Green Cross AVP for advertising and promotions, Joanna Yap, formally open the Oplan clinic as the doctors and the Oplan boys look on.



THE OPLAN Bantay Kalusugan Boys pose for a picture together with the Oplan Clinic staff.



QC Vice Mayor Herbert Bautista allows himself to be checked as well.

Green Cross at the Quezon City Hall and in Marikina Sports Complex simultaneously. The event is a caravan of two mobile clinics that would conduct medical missions all over Luzon for five months. Each mobile clinic will visit different municipalities daily and give free medical checkups, free medicines, free vitamins and a lot of free Green Cross alcohol.

The Oplan Bantay Kalusugan team consists of doctors, nurses and the very distinct Green Cross boys who are there to assist the medical team.

To some extent, Oplan Bantay Kalusugan is a welcome effort as it spreads throughout Luzon, with the hope of spreading faster than the dreaded SARS.

Watch out for the Green Cross mobile clinics in your area:

May:

Matnog, Irosin, Juban, Casiguran, Sorsogon, Guinobatan, Camahig, Daraga, Legaspi, Oas, Ligao, Polangui, Bato, Iriga, Nabua, Baco, Pili, Naga, San Fernando, Libmanan, Laoag, Badoc, Batac, San Nicolas, Sinait, Cabaog, San Juan, Magsingal, Vigan, Sto. Domingo, Bantay, Santa, Narvacan, Sta. Maria, Santiago, Candon, Sta. Lucia, Sta. Cruz, Tagudin.

June:

Del Gallego, Ragay, Lupi, Sipocot, Daet, Labo, Calauag, Lopez, Gumaca, Lucena, Atimonan, Pagbajao, Lucban, Tayabas, Sarinaya, Candelaria, Tiaong, San Pablo City, Alaminos, Pagsanjan, Sta. Cruz, Pila, Bangar, Balaoan, Bacnotan, San Juan, Bauang, San Fernando, Aringay, Agoo, Sto. Tomas, Rosario, Baguio, San Fabian, Mangaldan, Calasiao, Lingayen, Dagupan, Alaminos, San Carlos, Sison, Pozorrubio, Manaoag, Laoac.

July:

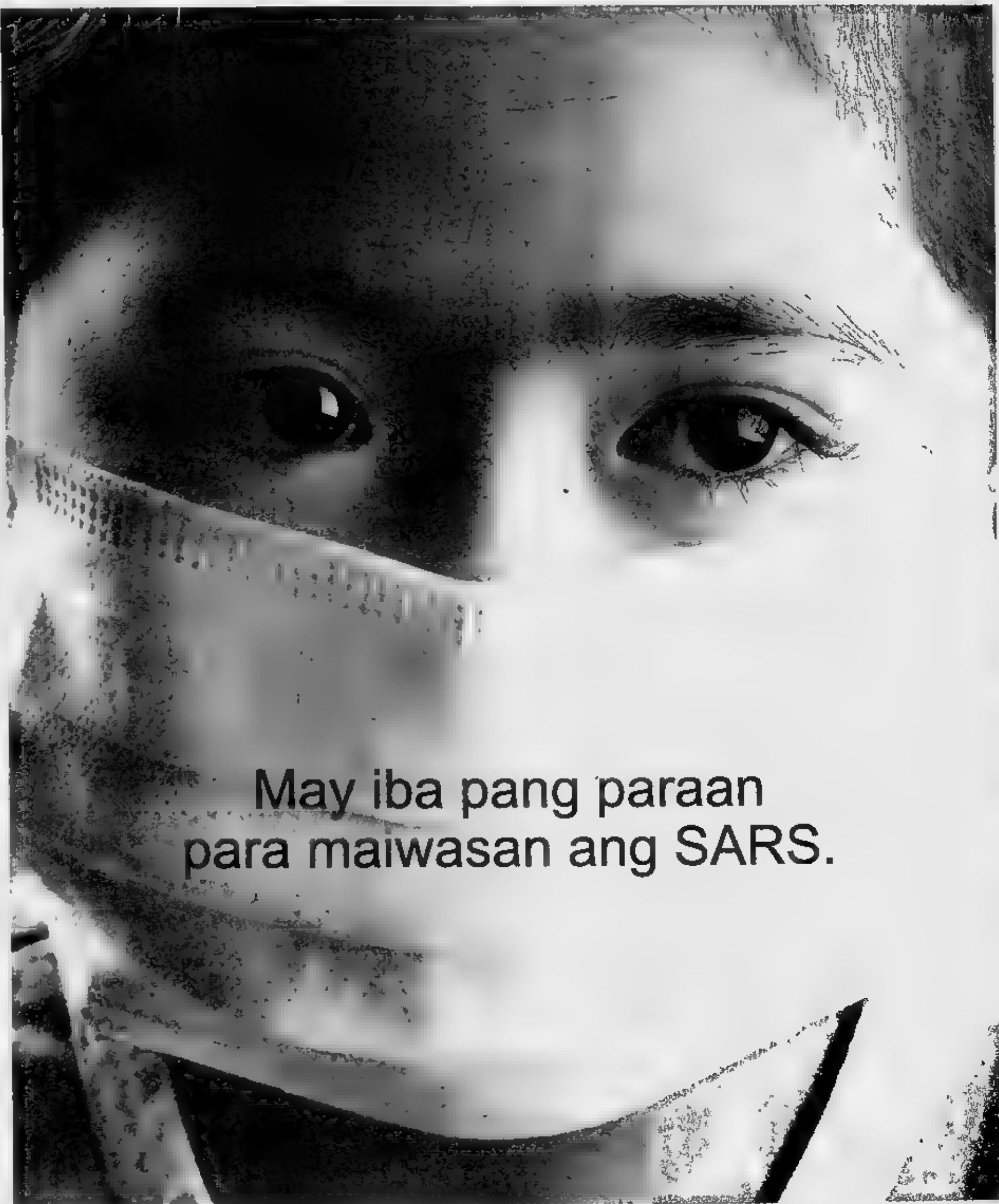
Calauag, Los Banos, Calamba, Cabuyao, Sta. Rosa, Binang, San Pedro, Carmona, Gen. Alvarez, Trece Martires, Dasmariñas, Imus, Bacoor, Cavite, Kawit, Noveleta, Rosario, Tanza, Gen. Trias, Silang, Tagaytay, Nasugbu, Lian, Calatagan, Binalonan, Urdaneta, Villasis, Moncada, Paniqui, Gerona, Capas, Concepcion, Tarlac, Tuguegarao, San Pablo, Cabagan, Tamaunini, Ilagan, Naguilian, Cauayan, Alicia, Echague, Santiago, Cordon, Diadi, Solano.

August:

Tuy, Balayan, Calaca, Lemery, Taal, Bauan, Batangas City, San Juan, Rosario, Ibaan, San Jose, Tanauan, Talisay, Sto. Tomas, Montalban, San Mateo, Cainta, Taytay, Angono, Antipolo, Binangonan, Teresa, Morong, Tanauan, Bayombong, Bambang, Arlito, Sta. Fe, Munoz, Talavera, Cabanatuan, Gapan, Sta. Rosa, Zaragoza, La Paz, Bamban, Sta. Cruz, Candelaria, Masinloc, Palauig, Iba, Botolan, Cabangon, San Felipe, San Narciso, San Marcelino, Castillejos.

September:

Obando, Meycauayan, Marilao, Bocaue, SJD, Sta. Maria, Norzagaray, Angat, San Rafael, San Ildefonso, San Miguel, Baliuag, Pulilan, Plaridel, Guiguinto, Malolos, Paombong, Hagonoy, Calumpit, Apalit, San Simon, San Luis, Candaba, Arayat, Magalang, Subic, Olongapo, Morong, Bagac, Mariveles, Limay, Orion, Pilar, Balanga, Abucay, Samal, Orani, Hermosa, Dinalupihan, Labao, Guagua, Sta. Rita, Bacolor, San Fernando, Mexico, Sta. Ana, Mabalacat, Angeles City.



May iba pang paraan
para maiwasan ang SARS.



Mag Green Cross
para mapanatiling malinis ang inyong mga kamay. It kills 99.9% of germs na maaaring magdulot ng sakit

Mag Greenex
para laging malinis ang kusina at banyo. Siguradong patay ang germs kaya ligtas ang buong pamilya sa sakit.

Mag Zonrox
Ayon sa DOH, mabisang pang disinfect ang bleach. Kaya sa Zonrox, magiging germ-free ang mga puting damit pati buong bahay.



Alternative medicine to fight SARS



HOMEOPATHY is the original alternative medicine. Developed 200 years ago and still in use worldwide; it is believed to be the ideal medicine for the 21st century for the following reasons.

- It is an approach that uses medicines that stimulate the body's immune and defense system to initiate the healing process.
- It is widely recognized to be safe.
- It is believed to be potentially effective in treating the new types of diseases manifesting in the new millennium like diseases of the immune system not just AIDS, bacterial infections becoming resistant to commonly used antibiotics, viral conditions incurable with conventional therapies, allergies to food, to common substances and to new chemicals, chronic disability afflicting people at younger ages, and increase in mental disease.

Nena Abad Lagdameo, whose family pioneered

the practice of homeopathy in the Philippines since the turn of the century, will run a 20-hour course on "Homeopathy: Alternative Medicine for the 21st Century—practicing it in the Philippines" starting Saturday, May 24 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the training room, Taguig Eastpoint Business Center, East Service Road after the Fort Bonifacio entrance in Taguig.

Succeeding meetings are May 31, June 7 and June 14 (same time). A certificate of attendance will be awarded each participant. Materia Medica and Repertory, homeopathic books, tissue salts and homeopathic remedies will be made available for participants. For brochure detailing course content and other information, please call Melanie Talag, course coordinator and director Age of Aquarius Center for Holistic Healing at tel No. 726-2338.

Alcogel versus severe germs and bacteria

IF YOU haven't picked up the Alcogel habit by now, you better do soon. With germs all around us, it would take more than a quick washing with soap and water to protect us.

Exclusively manufactured by Scental Laboratories for Bench, the country's leading apparel and lifestyle brand, Alcogel is an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that kills germs and bacteria more effectively than your everyday soap.

Just apply a small amount on your hands, then rub lightly until your skin absorbs the formulation and voila, you're ready to reach out and touch somebody.

With Alcogel, your hands are kept 99.9 percent germ-free. It contains ethyl alcohol, a highly effective anti-microbial agent that provides broad-spectrum anti-microbial activity against bacteria, including antibiotic-resistant organisms. Also, the formulation includes isopropyl alcohol and benzalkonium chloride, which are known to be good and reliable disinfectants for that all-around germ-killing action.

Formulated with moisturizers, Alcogel increases skin hydration unlike plain alcohol and leaves no sticky or tacky residue. It has a clean citrus fragrance.

Despite its alcohol content, Alcogel does not dry out the skin. It is formulated with emollients to help condition the skin and reduce dryness and irritation. In fact,

studies have shown that alcohol-based hand sanitizers that contain moisturizers cause less irritation and dryness than soap and water washing. While it's true that in its pure state alcohol is drying, this drying effect is caused by the loss of natural oils when alcohol is wiped off the skin's surface. Since instant hand sanitizers are not wiped off, the skin oils are not removed. What's more, Alcogel is dermatologically tested to be mild and gentle on the skin.

Variants available include Classic Alcogel (P19/50 ml; P29/100 ml), which leaves a fresh clean scent without drying the skin; Alcogel with Vitamin E (P28/50 ml; P45/100 ml) that prevents skin cell damage working from within; and Alcogel with Aloe (P24/50 ml; P39/100 ml), which conditions and cleanses the skin and leaves it soft, smooth and clean-smelling.

What's more, Alcogel is of export quality, having met the standards set by the international healthcare community. Alcogel is now available in Hong Kong and Guam and soon in Singapore and China.

A perfect complementary to Alcogel is the Alcogel Cleanwipes. An anti-bacterial wet tissue, it offers quick relief from dirt and grime anytime, anywhere. As its name suggests, you only have to wipe it onto your hands or whatever body part you wish to be rid of dust, and you're all fresh and cleaned up in a second.

Itam SARS • Patibayin SARS • Baitam SARS • Baitam SARS

KULANG

Halos wala palang silbi ang facial mask
kontra SARS kung sadyang mahina
ang resistensya ng katawan sa sakit.
Kung ikaw ay sipunin at kapitin ng
ubo at flu, kandidato ka pa rin sa
SARS. Kasi, hindi lang sa hininga
maaaring mahawa.



What's important is building the body's
inner resistance against infectious diseases.
Kaya may PCO-Plus. It has Proanthocya-
nadin Oligomer, a grape seed extract na
kilala for enhancing the body's immune
system. Take it twice daily to complete
your anti-SARS regimen.

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KULANG

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What's important is building the body's inner resistance against infectious diseases. Kaya may PCO-Plus. It has Proanthocyanadin Oligomer, a grape seed extract na kilala for enhancing the body's immune system. Take it twice daily to complete your anti-SARS regimen.

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PROANTHOCYANADIN OLIGOMER



Isa laban sa lahat.

Hospital staff vulnerable to

SINCE mid-February, the World Health Organization has been actively working to confirm reports of outbreaks of a severe form of pneumonia in Vietnam, Hong Kong, China, and Guangdong province in China.

In Vietnam the outbreak began with a single initial case who was hospitalized for treatment of severe, acute respiratory syndrome of unknown origin. He felt unwell during his journey and fell ill shortly after arrival in Hanoi from Shanghai and Hong Kong. Following his admission to the hospital, approximately 20 hospital staff became sick with similar symptoms.

The signs and symptoms of the disease in Hanoi include initial flu-like illness (rapid onset of high fever followed by muscle aches, headache and sore throat). These are the most common symptoms. Early laboratory findings may include thrombocytopenia (low platelet count) and leucopenia (low white blood cell count). In some, but not all cases, this is followed by bilateral pneumonia, in some cases progressing to acute respiratory distress requiring assisted breathing on a respirator. Some patients are recovering but some patients remain critically ill.

The Department of Health Hong Kong had reported on an outbreak of respiratory illness in one of its public hospitals. On March 11, 50 health care workers had been screened and 23 of them were found to have febrile illness. They were admitted to the hospital for observation as a precautionary measure. In this group, eight had developed early chest x-ray signs of pneumonia. Their conditions are stable. Three other health care workers self-presented to hospitals with febrile illness and two of them have

chest x-ray signs of pneumonia.

Investigation by Hong Kong public health authorities is ongoing. The Hospital Authority has increased infection control measures to prevent the spread of the disease in the hospital. So far, no link has been found between these cases and the outbreak in Hanoi.

In mid February, the Government of China reported that 305 cases of atypical pneumonia, with five deaths, had occurred in Guangdong province. In two cases that died, chlamydia infection was found. Further investigations of the cause of the outbreak is ongoing. Overall the outbreaks in Hanoi and Hong Kong appear to be confined to the hospital environment. Those at highest risk appear to be staff caring for the patients.

No link has so far been made between these outbreaks of acute respiratory illness in Hanoi and Hong Kong and the outbreak of 'bird flu,' A(H5N1) in Hong Kong reported on Feb. 19. Further investigations continue and laboratory tests on specimens from Vietnam and Hong Kong are being studied by WHO collaborating centers in Japan and the United States.

Until more is known about the cause of these outbreaks, WHO recommends patients with atypical pneumonia who may be related to these outbreaks be isolated with barrier nursing techniques. At the same time, WHO recommends that any suspect cases be reported to national health authorities.

WHO is in close contact with relevant national authorities and has also offered epidemiological, laboratory and clinical support. WHO is working with national authorities to ensure appropriate investigation, reporting and containment of these outbreaks.



WHO sets safety guidelines for handling SARS specimens

THE FOLLOWING biosafety guidelines have been prepared by WHO for handling clinical specimens associated with SARS.

SARS specimens should be handled according to appropriate biosafety practices in order to avoid laboratory-related infections and spread of disease to close contacts. As the primary route of infection is thought to be via droplets, extreme caution must be exercised to eliminate the unguarded production of aerosols. Detailed information about containment facilities and biosafety practices recommended in this document may be found in the WHO Laboratory Biosafety Manual, 2nd revised edition, available from the WHO web site. According to the latest findings, the etiologic agent responsible for the syndrome is a previously unknown coronavirus, currently called SARS

coronavirus, or SARS-CoV. Accordingly, all laboratory work practices should be appropriate for work with viral agents, with particular emphasis on potential spread by droplets, air, and/or contaminated surfaces and objects. No procedure should be undertaken in which there is any doubt about the ability to adequately contain the specimen and prevent the uncontrolled release of the virus.

The following activities may be performed in biosafety level 2 (BSL-2) facilities with appropriate BSL-2 work practices:

- Routine diagnostic testing of serum and blood samples
- Manipulations involving known inactivated (lysed, fixed or otherwise treated) virus particles and/or

WHO/16



A SARS patient receives treatment behind double layer glass windows and strict quarantine measures at the Beijing Ditan Hospital in Beijing, China, Sunday, April 13, 2003. On April 20, China reported a jump in SARS deaths and a nearly tenfold increase in cases in Beijing as officials canceled the weeklong May Day vacation, trying to stop tens of millions of Chinese from traveling and spreading the virus. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan) (Bild 1)

DOH's 10 Utos Laban sa SARS

Ironically, if there is one good thing that came out of this dreaded virus, it is that people have become more conscious about their personal hygiene. Below are the 10 things the Department of Health advises people to do to prevent the spread of SARS.

1. Make sure that you have strong body resistance and in a clean bill of health. A visit to the doctor is advisable.
2. Always keep your body, especially the hands, clean.
3. Cover your mouth when you feel like coughing or sneezing especially in public. Avoid spitting in public places.
4. Consult the doctor or any health worker if you suspect you have the symptoms of the virus. Most common symptom is high fever.
5. Inform medical health workers of your condition especially people who traveled from SARS-infected countries.
6. Voluntary quarantine of up to two weeks is required from travelers.
7. Health workers must always keep in the mind the Universal Health and Safety Precautions at all times.
8. Wear facemasks if you suspect you have SARS.
9. People with weak immune system or have low resistance must limit interaction with people especially those who are sick.
10. Keep your house and surroundings clean.

SARS HOTLINES: 741-7048 / 743-1937
Or
Type SARS space (message) and send to 2960

Clean your hands before anything severe happens.

bench/prescribe

ALCOGEL

SCENTRAL LABORATORIES

SARS multi-country outbreak update

AS OF APRIL 26



Good procedures of infection control were rapidly established (in Vietnam) and eventually proved effective in preventing further spread among hospital staff

Situation in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Vietnam

A WHO team of six experts, in Shanghai since Monday, has provided a preliminary report of its findings. The team was invited by Shanghai authorities to assess the SARS situation in China's second largest city.

Among its activities, the team examined the SARS surveillance and reporting system, investigated rumors that the case burden might be higher than officially reported, and visited 10 health facilities, three district Centers for Disease Control, and the municipal Center for Disease Control. The team was given free access to all requested data, patient registries, and facilities, which were visited on very short notice.

The team found no evidence of systematic underreporting of cases, and concluded that the level of preparedness and re-

sponse was good. Reporting of cases appeared to be open, frank, and accurate. Over the past 3 to 4 weeks, authorities designated two hospitals as dedicated to the treatment of SARS patients and set up cough and fever clinics. The team also found a very high level of government commitment to tackle the SARS problem.

Many questions remain about why Shanghai has been spared a SARS outbreak on the scale of that seen in Beijing. Had a larger number of cases occurred, it is not certain whether the systems presently in place would have been able to cope.

Situation in Hong Kong

Health authorities announced 17 new cases, including 3 in health care workers, and 6 deaths, including the youngest SARS fatality in Hong Kong to date. This was a previ-

ously healthy 28-year-old man from the Amoy Gardens housing estate cluster. The other deaths occurred in men aged 38, 40, 61, and 70 years, and a 45-year-old woman. Only one of these patients, the 70-year-old man, had a history of chronic disease.

Of the six deaths announced yesterday, three were from the Amoy Gardens cluster.

Authorities are continuing to investigate a small cluster of cases in the Tung Tau housing estate, where six cases have occurred in vertically linked flats. Presently available epidemiological evidence gives no reason to anticipate an outbreak at the estate on the scale of Amoy Gardens cluster, which involved more than 320 residents of a single building.

A WHO team of environmental and "sick building" experts arrived in Hong Kong to assist

local experts in the investigation of possible environmental sources of the virus.

No new cases in Vietnam for 18 days

The SARS situation in Vietnam has remained stable, at 63 cases and 5 deaths, for 18 consecutive days. Active investigation of numerous rumors has failed to detect a new case of SARS throughout this period. If the trend continues, the country will be removed from the list of affected areas on Monday, making Vietnam the first country to contain its SARS outbreak.

WHO officials in Vietnam cautioned against a lapse in the present high state of alert, as the risk persists that a single imported case could seed an outbreak, as happened in February. However, the government showed strong commitment at the highest

level from the beginning of the outbreak. Task forces and provincial teams were established and have worked well. Good procedures of infection control were rapidly established and eventually proved effective in preventing further spread among hospital staff.

Should the country experience an imported case, this newly established infrastructure would most likely be effective in preventing another large outbreak.

Update on cases and countries

As of today, a cumulative total of 4836 cases with 293 deaths have occurred in 26 countries. This represents an increase of 190 new cases and 19 deaths compared with yesterday April 25. The new deaths occurred in Canada (3), China (7), Hong Kong (6), the Philippines (1), and Singapore (2).

WHO sets safety guidelines . . .

From page 15

incomplete, non-infectious portions of the viral genome

- Routine examination of mycotic and bacterial cultures.
- Final packaging of specimens for transport to diagnostic laboratories for additional testing.
- Specimens should already be in a sealed, decontaminated primary container

The following precautions are strongly recommended by WHO for work in BSL-2 laboratories with potential SARS specimens:

- Any procedure that may generate aerosols should be performed in a biological safety cabinet.
- Laboratory workers should wear protective equipment, including disposable gloves, solid-front or wrap-around gowns with cuffed sleeves, eye protection and a surgical mask, or full-face shield, according to the risk of aerosols and exposure when performing specific manipulations. When working at a biological safety cabinet, a full face shield is not necessary.
- Centrifugation of human specimens should be performed using sealed centrifuge rotors or sample cups. These rotors or cups should be unloaded in a biological safety cabinet.
- Procedures performed outside of a biological safety cabinet should be performed in a manner that minimizes the risk of exposure to an inadvertent release of the etiologic agent.
- Work surfaces and equipment should be decontaminated after specimens are processed.
- Standard decontamination agents that are effective against lipid-enveloped viruses should be sufficient.
- Biological waste should be treated as outlined in the WHO Laboratory Biosafety Manual, 2nd revised edition which renders viral particles inactive.

In cases where laboratory facilities are marginal, consideration should be given to referral of specimens to a suitably equipped reference laboratory for primary diagnostic tests.

The following activities require BSL-3 facilities and BSL-3 work practices.

- Viral cell culture of the etiologic agent.
- Manipulations involving growth or concentration of the eti-

ologic agent.

When a procedure or process cannot be conducted within a biological safety cabinet, then appropriate combinations of personal protective equipment (e.g., respirators, face shields) and physical containment devices (e.g., centrifuge safety cups or sealed rotors) must be used.

Transport of human specimens

Transport of specimens within national borders should comply with current national regulations.

International air transport of human specimens from suspect or probable SARS cases must follow the current (2003) edition of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Dangerous Goods Regulations.

- Dangerous goods index
- Consignment of diagnostic specimens 2003

Current IATA regulations (2003) allow specimens known or suspected of containing the SARS agent to be transported as UN 3373 Diagnostic Specimens when they are transported for diagnostic or investigational purposes.

Specimens transported for any other purposes must be transported as UN 2814, and marked as: Infectious substance, affecting humans (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus).

Cultures prepared for the deliberate generation of pathogens may not be transported as diagnostic specimens, but as UN 2814, Infectious Substance, affecting humans (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome virus).

All specimens to be transported (UN 3373 or UN 2814) must be packaged in triple packaging consisting of three packaging layers: UN 3373, Diagnostic Specimens, shall be packed in good quality packaging, which shall be strong enough to withstand the shocks and loads normally encountered during transport. Packaging shall be constructed and closed so as to prevent any loss of contents that might be caused under normal conditions of transport, by vibration or by changes in temperature, humidity or pressure.

Primary receptacles shall be packed in secondary packaging in

such a way that, under normal conditions of transport, they cannot break, be punctured or leak their contents into the secondary packaging. Secondary packaging shall be placed in a final outer package with suitable cushioning material. Any leakage of the contents shall not substantially impair the protective properties of the cushioning material or of the outer packaging.

For liquids

The primary receptacle(s) shall be leak proof and shall not contain more than 500 ml. There shall be absorbent material placed between the primary receptacle and the secondary packaging, if several fragile primary receptacles are placed in a single secondary packaging, they shall be either individually wrapped or separated so as to prevent contact between them. The absorbent material shall be in sufficient quantity to absorb the entire contents of the primary receptacles and there shall be a secondary packaging, which shall be leak proof. The primary receptacle or the secondary packaging shall be capable of withstanding without leakage an internal pressure producing a pressure differential of not less than 95 kPa (0.95 bar). The outer packaging shall not contain more than 4 liters.

For solids

The primary receptacle(s) shall be siftproof and shall not contain more than 500g. If several fragile primary receptacles are placed in a single secondary packaging, they shall be either individually wrapped or separated so as to prevent contact between them and there shall be a secondary packaging which shall be leak proof. The outer packaging shall not contain more than 4 kg.

For air transport, the smallest overall external dimension of a completed package must be at least 10 mm.

Packaging must conform to certain performance standards. For further information about definitions, packaging requirements, markings and labels, accompanying documentation, and refrigerants, please refer to the competent authority, current IATA shipping guidelines, commercial packaging suppliers, or available courier companies. (From www.who.int)

What is SARS and what are its symptoms?

SARS is the acronym for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome. Outbreaks have been reported in Asia, North America, and Europe. The incubation period is usually two to seven days, but have been as long as 10 days in a few cases. SARS usually begins with a fever a temperature higher than 100.4°F (higher than 38.0°C). In addition to the fever, symptoms may include:

- headache
- chills
- body aches
- general feeling of discomfort
- mild respiratory symptoms at the outset

- after three to seven days, SARS patients may develop a dry, nonproductive cough possibly accompanied by or progressing to the point where insufficient oxygen is getting to the blood. In 10 to 20 percent of cases, patients will require mechanical ventilation

What causes SARS?

Although other viruses are still under investigation as the possible cause of SARS, researchers at the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other laboratories have isolated a formerly unknown coronavirus from the tissues of SARS patients. Coronaviruses are a common cause of upper respiratory illness and can survive in the environment for up to three hours.

How is SARS spread?

According to the CDC, "The principal way SARS appears to be spread is through droplet transmission; namely, when someone sick with SARS coughs or sneezes droplets into the air and someone else breathes them in. It is possible that SARS can be transmitted more broadly through the air or from objects that have become contaminated. It is possible that SARS could be spread when a person touches a contaminated object or surface; however, how often this might happen, or if it happens at all, is not known at this time. Previously identified coronaviruses (scientists have reported that a new

Before you leave...

IF YOU decide to go ahead with your travel to an area with SARS, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Be sure to include a thermometer, household disinfectant, a supply of surgical masks and disposable gloves (for use if you or someone you are traveling with becomes ill with SARS), and alcohol-based hand rubs for hand hygiene.

- Inform yourself and others who may be traveling with you about SARS. For information about this illness, see the Center for Disease Control's SARS website.

- Be sure you are up to date with all your shots, and see your health-care provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before travel to get any additional shots or information you may need. For information on CDC health recommendations for international travel, see CDC's Travelers' Health site.

- You may wish to check your health insurance plan or get additional insurance that covers medical evacuation in the event of illness.

- Identify in-country health-care resources in advance of your trip.

While you are in an area with SARS:

- To protect against SARS

infection, wash your hands frequently.

- To minimize the possibility of infection, you may wish to avoid close contact with large numbers of people as much as possible. CDC does not recommend the routine use of masks or other personal protective equipment while in public areas.

If you think you have SARS:

- If you become ill with fever and respiratory symptoms (for example, cough or shortness of breath), a visit to a health-care provider is strongly recommended. Tell the provider about your symptoms prior to going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the health-care setting. Do not travel while sick and limit your contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of any infectious illness you may have.

- The person who is ill should cover their mouth and nose with a facial tissue when coughing or sneezing. If possible, they should wear a surgical mask during close contact with healthy people to prevent spread of infectious droplets. If the sick person is unable to wear a surgical

mask, other persons should wear surgical masks when in close contact with the person who is ill.

- Use of disposable gloves should be considered for any direct contact with body fluids of a person with SARS. However, gloves are not intended to replace proper hand hygiene. Immediately after activities involving contact with body fluids, gloves should be removed and discarded and hands should be cleaned. Gloves must never be washed or reused.

- All close contacts staying with a person with SARS should carefully follow recommendations for hand hygiene (e.g., frequent hand washing or use of alcohol-based hand rubs), particularly after contact with body fluids (e.g., respiratory secretions, urine, or feces).

- People with SARS should avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, and bedding with others, although these items can be used by others after routine cleaning, such as washing or laundering with soap and hot water.

- Environmental surfaces (e.g., toilets, sinks) soiled by body fluids should be cleaned with a household disinfectant according to manufacturer's instructions; gloves should be worn during this activity.

Wash hands afterwards and throw the gloves away.

- Other close contacts staying with a person with SARS do not need to restrict their outside activities unless they develop symptoms of SARS, such as a fever or respiratory illness.

After your return:

Persons returning from one of the affected areas should monitor their health for 10 days. Any family member who becomes ill with fever or respiratory symptoms during this period should consult a health-care provider and tell him or her about their recent travel. Tell the provider about your symptoms prior to going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the health-care setting.

Close contacts of person with SARS who develop fever or respiratory symptoms should be evaluated by a health-care provider. Before the evaluation, health-care providers should be informed that the individual is a close contact of a person with SARS. These persons with symptoms of SARS should follow the same precautions recommended for people with SARS.



Q & A with Dr. M.P. Macapinlac, Ph.D.

SEVERE Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a new viral infection contaminating the world over. Originating from China's Guangdong province, this respiratory illness has infected an estimated 4836 individuals, with a 4 percent death toll of 293. Majority of the casualties have been the elderly; those with chronic diseases or a combination of both.

As of late, there is no known cure. In the absence of specialized and effective drugs, the protection and survival against viral infections depend on the adequacy of the body's natural defense mechanisms. Dr. M.P. Macapinlac, Ph.D. explains how prevention is still the best weapon against this atypical pneumonia.

Q: What preventive measures should be made against SARS?

A: It is imperative that

we strengthen our body's immune system. Vitamin C is an important and valuable source in building our body's resistance. It inhibits the growth of viruses and is therefore crucial in the treatment of viral diseases. Vitamin C also stimulates macrophage functions, increases the activity of natural killer (NK) cells, and enhances a host of bodily functions which enable our body to combat viral diseases and infections.

Multivitamin Enervon C has 500 mg of Vitamin C. Its disease-fighting effects are reinforced by the presence of 800 mg of B Complex vitamins B6, folic acid, B12 and riboflavin, which are also needed to boost our immune system. These B vitamins help in the production of antibodies and the release of energy. A recommended daily dose of 600 mg of Multivitamin Enervon C plus exercise, ensure a strong and healthy, SARS-resistant body.

SARS

From page 16

coronavirus may be the cause of SARS) have been shown to survive in the environment for as long as 3 hours. To reduce the overall risk for infection by touching contaminated objects and surfaces, CDC recommends that people wash their hands thoroughly and often with soap and water."

What is the treatment for SARS?

The CDC-recommended treatment regimen includes antibiotics to treat bacterial agents known to cause atypical pneumonia, antiviral agents such as ribavirin and oseltamivir. Additionally,

steroids have been administered either intravenously or orally in combination with ribavirin and other antimicrobials. These are the same treatments that are recommended for patients who have developed atypical pneumonia after exposure to it from another patient as opposed to the pneumonia developing from a more typical respiratory illness that progressed to pneumonia.

Although several such treatment regimens have been employed for SARS patients, there is not yet sufficient information to know how effective they are.

Preventing SARS infection

The World Health Organization (WHO) so far lists around 25 countries as affected by Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), gathering more than 4,000 victims, and more than 250 deaths worldwide. SARS is indeed infectious, and everybody should take preventive measures to avoid contracting its deadly virus.

The SARS virus is believed to be contracted through droplets - by direct physical contact with infected persons or through contaminated objects. Droplets are vapor that come out of the mouth when a person coughs, sneezes, or by merely talking.

The Department of Health and health experts worldwide recommend the following to avoid SARS infection.

Hand sanitation. Make it a habit to wash hands frequently using alcohol-based hand rubs especially after contact from another person who might have sneezed or coughed. Disinfect hands with 70% Isopropyl Alcohol. A clinical study shows 70% Isopropyl Alcohol can kill disease-causing germs including coronavirus, a virus which can cause the common cold. A strain of coronavirus is currently being considered as the main cause of SARS.

Hand cover. Disposable gloves can prevent contact with the virus especially for health workers. However, this should not replace hand washing and disinfection. These gloves must be disposed properly and hands must be washed and disinfected after use.

Nose and mouth cover. When sneezing or coughing, cover the mouth and nose with facial tissue. SARS patients should also wear clean masks with filter to prevent spreading droplets. Uninfected individuals are also advised to wear masks especially when in close contact with a SARS patient.

Outdoor exposure. Avoid crowded places. In case this cannot be avoided, disinfect hands immediately after exposure.

Healthy lifestyle. Some tips on how to strengthen one's resistance: Maintain a balanced diet, take Vitamin C regularly, exercise and refrain from smoking.

Don't get trapped in this mystery called SARS. You can fight it and get yourself and your loved ones protected.

For inquiries, call DOH IWAS SARS Hotline: 741-7048 or 743-1937 or text: 0916-4665823.

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SARS

AWARDS

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

According to World Health Organization (WHO) study, the coronavirus may be the cause of SARS. Disinfect with BAND-AID 70% Isopropyl Alcohol. Kills 99.99% of disease-causing germs.

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Special PROJECT



Before you leave...

IF YOU decide to go ahead with your travel to an area with SARS, keep the following guidelines in mind.

- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Be sure to include a thermometer, household disinfectant, a supply of surgical masks and disposable gloves (for use if you or someone you are traveling with becomes ill with SARS), and alcohol-based hand rubs for hand hygiene.

- Inform yourself and others who may be traveling with you about SARS. For information about this illness, see the Center for Disease Control's SARS website.

- Be sure you are up to date with all your shots and see your health-care provider at least 4 to 6 weeks before travel to get any additional shots or information you may need. For information on CDC health recommendations for international travel, see CDC's Travelers' Health site.

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- If you become ill with fever and respiratory symptoms (for example, cough or shortness of breath), a visit to a health-care provider is strongly recommended. Tell the provider about your symptoms prior to going to the office or emergency room so arrangements can be made, if necessary, to prevent transmission to others in the health-care setting. Do not travel while sick and limit your contact with others as much as possible to help prevent the spread of any infectious illness you may have.

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- People with SARS should avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, and bedding with others, although these items can be used by others after routine cleaning, such as washing or laundering with soap and hot water.

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Wash hands afterwards and throw the gloves away.

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After your return:

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Close contacts of people with SARS who develop fever or respiratory symptoms should be evaluated by a health-care provider. Before the evaluation, health-care providers should be informed of the person's recent travel to an affected area. People with SARS should follow the instructions recommended for people with ARS.



Q & A with Dr. M.P. Macapinlac, Ph.D.

Q: SEVERE ACUTE RESPIRATORY SYNDROME (SARS) is a new infection originating in Guangdong, China. What is the source of the virus?

A: The source of the virus is still unknown. It is believed that the virus may have originated in a person who became ill with the disease and then spread it to others. The virus is believed to be a new strain of coronavirus.

Q: How is the virus spread?

A: The virus is spread through direct contact with an infected person, such as coughing or sneezing, or through contact with contaminated surfaces. It is also spread through contact with body fluids, such as saliva, urine, and feces.

Q: What are the symptoms of SARS?

A: The symptoms of SARS include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Some people also experience muscle aches, headache, and diarrhea. The disease typically begins with a fever and a cough, and then progresses to shortness of breath.

Q: How is SARS treated?

A: There is no specific treatment for SARS. Treatment is supportive, focusing on relieving symptoms and preventing complications. Patients are usually hospitalized and given oxygen if they have difficulty breathing.

Q: How can I prevent SARS?

A: To prevent SARS, you should avoid close contact with people who are sick, wash your hands frequently with soap and water, and avoid touching your face. You should also avoid crowded places and public transportation.

Q: What should I do if I think I have SARS?

A: If you think you have SARS, you should stay at home and avoid contact with other people. You should also call your doctor for advice. If you are hospitalized, you should wear a mask and avoid contact with other patients.

Q: How long does it take to recover from SARS?

A: The recovery time for SARS varies from person to person. Some people recover within a few weeks, while others may take several months. It is important to continue to monitor your health and follow your doctor's advice.

SARS

coronavirus may be the cause of SARS) have been shown to survive in the environment for as long as 3 hours. To reduce the overall risk for infection by touching contaminated objects and surfaces, CDC recommends that people wash their hands thoroughly and often with soap and water."

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Outdoor exposure. Avoid crowded places. In case this cannot be avoided, disinfect hands immediately after exposure.

Healthy lifestyle. Some tips on how to strengthen one's resistance: Maintain balanced diet, take Vitamin C regularly, exercise and refrain from smoking.

Don't get trapped in this mystery, call for SARS. You can fight it and get yourself and your loved ones protected.

For inquiries, call DDI IWA SARS Hotline 741-7088, 743-7088 or text 911-465823.

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DISINFECTANT

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Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome has hogged the headlines for weeks, raising questions as to what we can actually do to fight it.

The answer was remarkably simple. Keep yourself healthy.

Now, more than ever, vitamins have never been so important.

BENEFITS OF VITAMIN C

Vitamin C plays an important role in building our bodies' immunity.

- It inhibits the growth of viruses and is therefore crucial in the treatment of viral diseases.
- It stimulates macrophage functions.
- It increases the activity of natural killer (NK) cells.
- It enhances a host of bodily functions which enable our bodies to fight viral diseases and infections.*

BENEFITS OF B - COMPLEX VITAMIN

- Helps maintain a healthy level of antibodies.
- Maintains a healthy immune system by preventing deficiencies.
- Releases energy that gives added strength to our immunity to sickness.

* from article by M.P. Macapinlac, M.D., Ph.D.

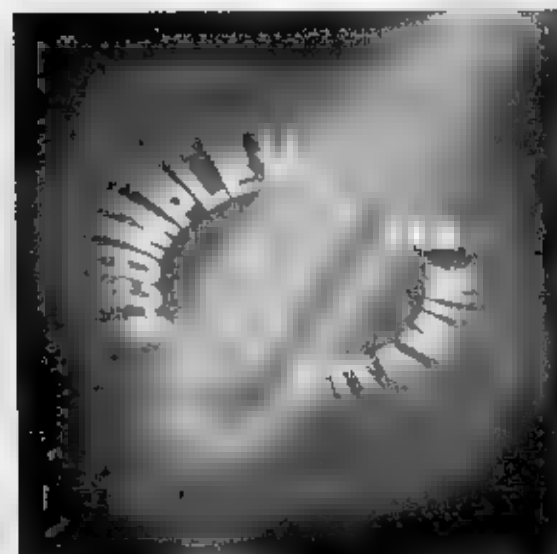
GET MORE DEFENSE AGAINST SARS.

THE DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF ENERVON TO HELP FIGHT THE VIRUS

Vitamin C (Anti-Infection)

+ Vitamin B-Complex
(Produces Antibodies/
Helps Release Energy)

Better Defense Against SARS



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Vitamin C and a full complement of the B - Complex vitamins provide essential metabolic elements needed for the proper utilization of carbohydrates, proteins and fats – the three main sources of energy.

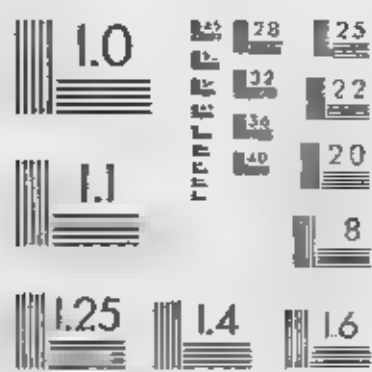
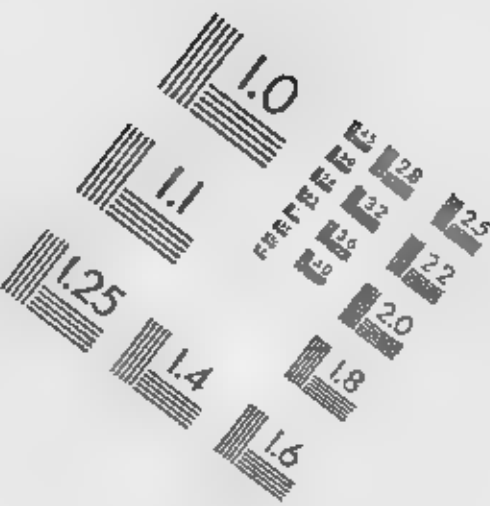
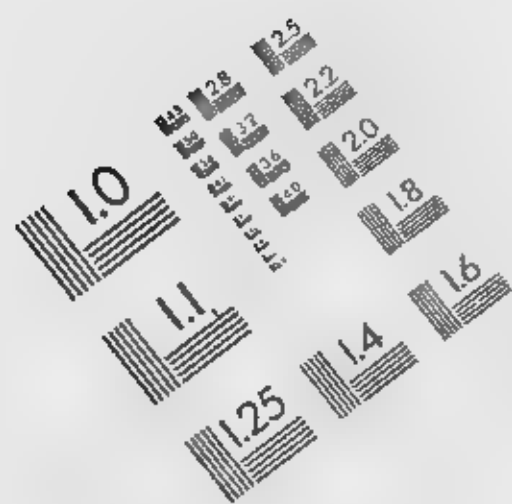
A steady supply of energy is crucial as lack of this could impair our immune function.

ENERVON LABAN SA PAGOD PUYAT AT SAKIT

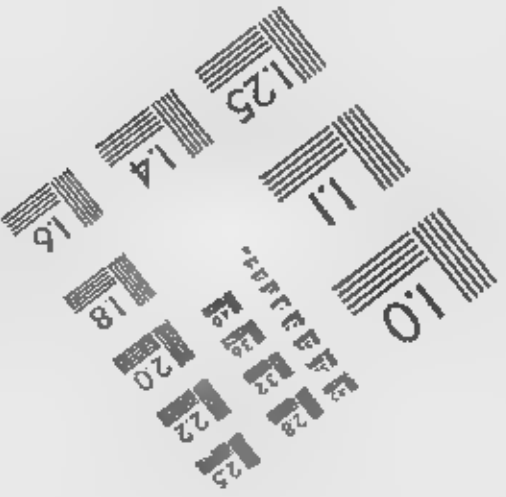
BE SAFER FROM SARS: BOOST YOUR IMMUNITY

Like the common cold, SARS has no cure yet. And we have no other recourse but to take all measures to prevent it, making sure we take the requisite vitamins which will boost our immunity to give us stronger resistance.

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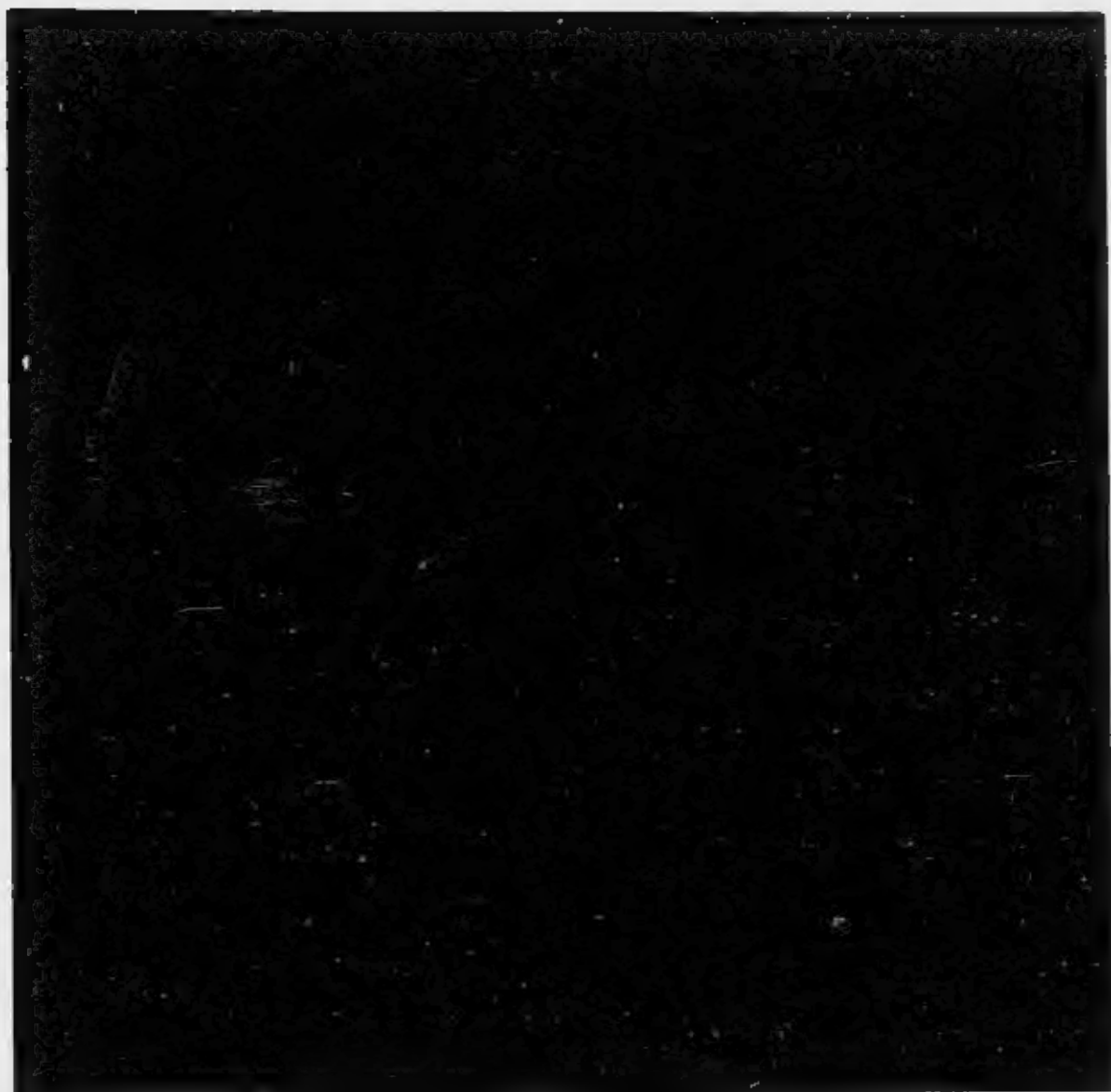
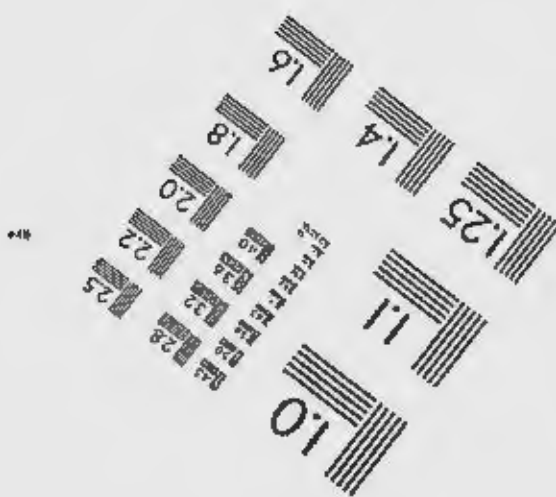
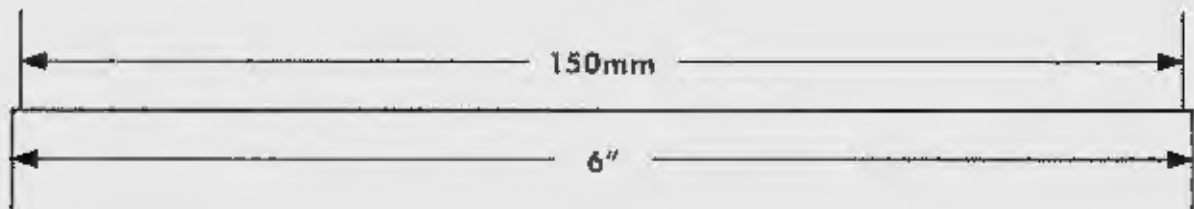
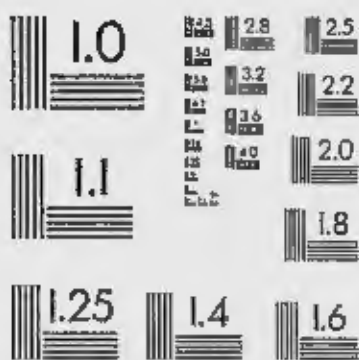
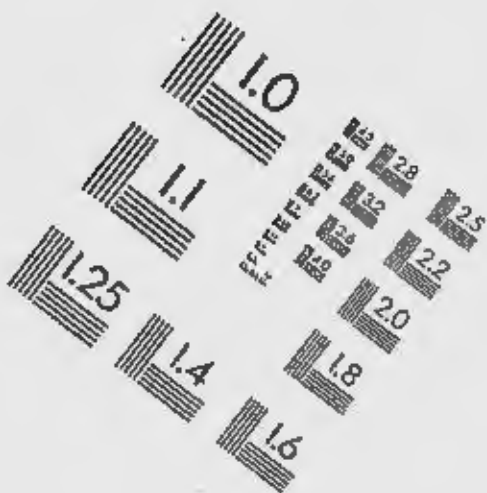
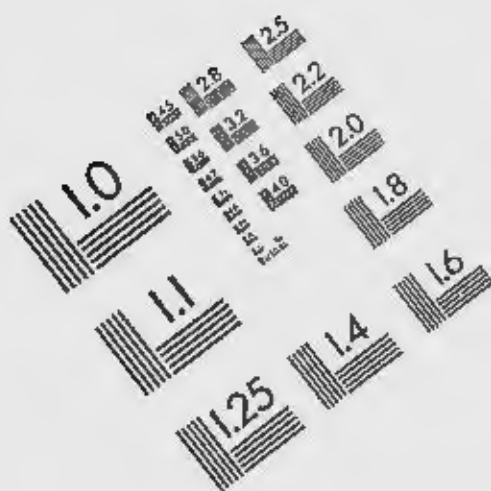


IMAGE EVALUATION
TEST TARGET (MT-3)



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